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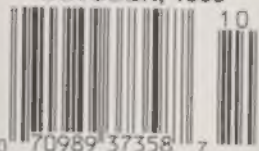


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CINESCAPE

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MORTAL COMBAT: Fox
Broadcasting's *Space*
is ready for launch

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A critic for the *London Observer* once said that intimacy, rather than sheer spectacle, is the true province of the cinema. This notion would shock most studio heads (and theater owners), who prize the medium's ability to create long lines at the box office through depictions of expansive new worlds and nonstop action. But while grand scope may indeed appeal to the largest audience, it has the least staying power.

With the rise of film schools, cinema increasingly has become a technical extravaganza, ideal for showing dazzling pyrotechnic displays within narratives bereft of humanity. Most of Hollywood's A-list directors are masters at staging their characters' gestures and idiosyncrasies, but their creations, even essayed by first-rate actors, are often nothing more than the sum of their mannerisms.

Part of the problem is Hollywood's obsession with plot. The late Alfred Hitchcock dismissed the stolen object or strand of secret information that serves as the pretext for many of his films, giving it the meaningless name "McGuffin." But today's filmmakers have seized the McGuffin as an end in itself. The illicit computer program in *The Net*, for example,

isn't simply a device that allows the film to explore the Sandra Bullock character, it is what the movie's about.

This trend of producing unfettered action with no human anchor has become so prevalent that we feel compelled to share our hurrahs when we come upon a filmmaker whose stated goal is to "invert and subvert" the status quo. That filmmaker is Kathryn Bigelow, a former painter and the ex-wife of action-blockbuster king James Cameron. With her emphasis on the people who are carrying the weaponry rather than the weaponry itself, she is ambitiously marching into rarely explored genre territory and laying down tracks for others to follow.

"I love action," the director told our assistant editor, Mo Ryan. "I love the play of it on your psyche." That she does. From her first film, 1981's *The Loveless*, a haunting biker tale starring Willem Dafoe, to this month's *Strange Days* (see page 44), Bigelow serves up fast-paced action vehicles that are driven by people we come to understand and truly care about. "Everything needs to be in service of the character," she says. That statement alone would be enough to drive Cameron out of the house.

—Douglas Perry
Editor

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IF YOU'RE ABDUCTED BY ALIENS THEY'LL REMEMBER WHERE YOU'RE FROM.



Batman Forever?

I recently saw the movie *Batman Forever*, and I thought Val Kilmer and Chris O'Donnell made a terrific dynamic duo. But I also felt there were problems with the movie. To me the weakest parts were the story and the direction. As Roger Ebert said in his movie review, "Batman is the most interesting of all comic-book characters, but after three tries they just can't seem to get it right. I think Batman deserves better." Why does Warner Bros., with its vast resources, not take the time and money to develop a script that would do justice to a Batman movie? How expensive would it be for the studio to petition a number of different screenwriters to come up with scripts, and choose the one that would be best suited. James Cameron would be on my list to direct. If Disney takes the time to nurture their animated movies from start to finish, shouldn't Warner Bros. treat Batman with the same care? After all, is it not their most valuable franchise? If the *Star Trek* produc-

ers take input from fans into consideration, shouldn't Warner Bros. do the same? It would be interesting to hear what other Batman fans think.

DAVE WHITE
ONTARIO, CANADA

Alien Debate 1

I am writing in response to your March 1995 issue concerning the article by Edward Gross about the efforts to bring back the *Alien* franchise. After reading this article over and over, it is obvious that the new scriptwriter, Joss Whedon, will have his hands full trying to convince the public that Ellen Ripley will return via DNA cloning. In case he hasn't noticed, DNA replication is an old and unoriginal idea. Coming out of the rubble left by the third movie, the *Alien* franchise will be hard enough to revitalize even without this cheesy reprieve of Ripley. Does the next movie actually need Sigourney Weaver? Why not create a new character to battle the aliens, then Whedon and the producers could expand and keep the franchise alive by

creating more sequels.

Whedon speaks some truth by stating that the new movie needs to be different in a way, yet still be true to the first two movies. I would not totally exclude the idea of the aliens coming to Earth. It could be like a futuristic *Outbreak*, in which H.R. Giger's aliens plague a community like a virus; on one side would be the public, which wants to destroy these killers and on the other side, the government who wants to save the aliens for military purposes. Whedon could possibly incorporate Dark Horse Comics' take on the alien in his script.

The *Alien* franchise, my favorite action/sci-fi series, cannot suffer another failure like the third movie. With a little help from the many great minds in Hollywood, Whedon should be able to put a good script together and pull off "the most anticipated, high-profile, science-fiction project." My point is that the script should not just rest on one idea, because at this point, considering Whedon's ideas of the fourth *Alien* installment, it

could crash and burn as the third sequel did.

ANDREW WESBECHER
OAKTON, VA

Alien Debate 2

I feel I must comment on a letter you printed in your August 1995 issue. You published a letter from Amanda Spano that dealt with the worthiness of Peter Briggs' *Alien vs. Predator* script as compared to Joss Whedon's *Alien 4*.

First off, it was only a matter of time before Briggs wrote to CINESCAPE to trumpet his screenplay, as he has done this with virtually every media magazine available. Briggs is quite proud of his screenplay, and has all the right to be, for screenwriting is a tough job, but honestly the script is not very good. There is very little character development and the characters he did bother to flesh out are rehashes from *Aliens*. It's your basic shoot-'em-up with very little that's new. I know this because I was one of the foolish people who, after reading Briggs brag about his work, bought a copy at a convention. I couldn't finish it. It was pointless mayhem, and even worse, it was dull. I loaned the copy to a friend and it garnered the same results—disregarded before it was finished.

Spano was quick to defend Briggs' script. All I would like to know is why? I saw no strength in the story. "Dignity" and "integrity" were not here, ma'am. She either hasn't read a page of the script and is therefore buying the hype Briggs has managed to drum up for himself or she read a drastically different version than the one I own. As for fans "eagerly awaiting its arrival on the big screen," most of the ones I've talked to would prefer both franchises to stay separated.



BAT ATTACK: Is Warner Bros. serious about its franchise?

It's obvious Spano is eager to see any kind of *Alien* vs. *Predator* film. But when all that's available is this lame *Aliens* wanna-be, the fans are better off wanting.

PETE CAFARO
CINNAMINSON, NJ

Allen Debate 3

I'm writing because of the raging debate going on in your Letters section over the fate of *Alien 4*. It's exciting to read that the series has a chance of continuing—and it's obvious that a lot of people feel very passionate about it.

I'm no expert at this, and I don't pretend to be, but the professional sniping that's going on isn't much fun to read anymore. The two camps of thought seem to be very much at odds—it's either the cloning or the *Predator* scenario and that's it—but I think there could be great potential in a combination of these two stories, where the best of both writers' ideas can be built upon to make something really amazing. I haven't read any of their work, but here's something to think about:

The real villain of the series hasn't been the aliens, it's been The Corporation and their Bio-Weapons Division. They've wanted the alien all along, so let them have it now. Set the story at the Bio-Weapons facility on Earth or on a space station near Earth. Let's say they've got DNA sludge from Ripley and the Queen that they start to incubate. Since it is a corporation, there would be a variety of human characters to play with, some likable, some not—scientists, security personnel, maintenance, etc. They may also have a variety of other samples under research: a predator, a SIL, anything you can think of, all under one roof. Then, as you'd expect, something goes wrong. The entire facility gets put under quarantine, humans included, then the lights go out, the bugs wake up, and it's

a free-for-all. Ripley, in whatever demented form, can do her thing, the Queen can face off with the Predator, and the humans can be stuck in the middle. Everyone's happy. Except for the director, who'll have one hell of a time trying to pull this thing off.

SAM DE SANTOL
NEW YORK, NY

TV Nation

In your last issue, there was an article about how the Sci-Fi Channel bought the rights to the original *Star Trek* and how that's the only place you'll find it after 1998. I can't believe they would do that. I am 16 years old and the only TV in our house with cable is in my parents' room. The original *Star Trek* is one of my favorite TV shows. I've been a Trekkie from day one, and now they are saying I have to ask my parents if I can watch the TV show. They have no right to do that to Trekkies without cable.

You also did a story on *The X-Files*—I really appreciate that. *The X-Files* is another of my faves. *TV Guide* also did an article, but yours was longer and had a lot more information and less opinions. I like to know the hard-core facts. The only thing wrong with *The X-Files* is that the show has gotten me so paranoid.

REBECCA THOMAS
ARLINGTON, TX

Higher Ground

The item "Immortal Franchise" in the News section of the August 1995 issue threw me into a cauldron of anger and disbelief. Another *Highlander* movie in the works? I look

upon this idea with utter disgust, not because I hate the idea of immortals lopping each others' heads off, but because every attempt to cash in on the cult popularity of the story has done nothing but dismember the original legend. I loved the first movie. It had a dark, somber setting, with a mysterious and compelling story. The characters were drawn against the background of a millennia, without the possibility of a mere mortal understanding these lives. That's what drew people to *Highlander*: the mystery of it all.

Then *Highlander 2* was released. Aliens? Outlaws from another world dressed like birds and zipping around on hover platforms? When did Connor become a great scientist? I almost left after the first 20 minutes but stayed only because I paid to see it. Whoever wrote that movie had obviously not bothered to see the first one, or they would have realized that the story was just not what it should or could have been. *Highlander 3* had promise but also had one major flaw: The magician would have been alive when Connor fought the



CABLE TREK: Boldly going to the Sci-Fi Channel

Kurgan; therefore, Connor could not have won the prize, as was shown in the first movie. A pretty big detail, if you ask me. The cartoon series that I glimpsed on cable is beneath discussion. In fact, the only addition that has any real merit is the syndicated TV series featuring Duncan Macleod. (How many immortals are in that family anyway?)

Now they want us to believe in a group of time-traveling immortals. Yeah, sure. If Dimension Films wants to give us another *Highlander*, give us the past, not the future. Show us the 467 years of Connor Macleod's life before he won the prize. Show us why the Kurgan was the strongest of the immortals or the romance that won Ramirez the sword of Masamune. There are far better stories buried in the past of the *Highlander* legend than can be found in new characters.

KEITH GRIFFITH
PRINCETON, WV

Biggs Finish

It's been reported in various magazines lately that the missing Biggs Darklighter scenes are being restored to the *Star Wars* Special Edition. This is not so. I've written to Lucasfilm since reading those reports and I received a reply from George Lucas' secretary, who said that she'd checked with George (twice) and he said that the Biggs scenes are not being restored. No reason was given.

Please print this because I'm trying to encourage SW fans to write to Lucas about this. The trouble is that people aren't bothering to write because they've read in magazines that George has already changed his mind. He hasn't—yet. If you want to see the Biggs scenes please write to: P.O. Box 2009, San Rafael, CA 94912-2009. All letters are read and your comments will be passed on to George Lucas.

Everyone who's ever read the novel or heard the radio play knows how important Biggs' scenes are: They intro-

duce Luke much earlier, they establish his situation, his piloting skills, etc. And, of course, the Death Star battle is much more dramatic once Biggs' character has been established. It makes more sense too.

Don't wait until after the Special Edition and then moan about it, write today. And if you're gonna make some changes, George, then can I also suggest that you give Chewie a medal. It shouldn't be difficult for your digital magicians, but keep it a secret—it'd be really great as a surprise.

GERALD CROTTY
BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND

Star Wars History

I found your August 1995 issue, well, rather amusing. First off, the bit about George Lucas and the upcoming *Star Wars* projects were interesting. But that was nothing new. And why the old shot of Lucas with a camera? Isn't there anything new to see? Still and all, it'll be good to see some real sci-fi back on the screen, despite the would-be followers we have had since '83. Face it, there hasn't been anything in the caliber of SW on the screen, except for the space operatics of *Star Trek*, which should be titled "As the Universe Turns: Part Whatever We Left Off With."

Star Wars brought to reality what we have today. I can't remember ever hearing the word "blockbuster" used before the trilogy came out. And then there's the fact that a sci-fi epic won no less than six Academy Awards. Yes, SW is where dreams were made and soon our dreams will return, despite the every-other-year yawners we see concerning a prime directive that's never followed.

Also, the article on *The X-Files* was the best piece of writing on the show I've seen yet.

MICHAEL JACKA
TACOMA, WA

Reviews Review

I am writing to Joe Funk and Frieda Noone about their



reviews of *Interview With the Vampire* and *Street Fighter* (July 1995).

I am astonished that Joe Funk failed to tell the whole truth about *Interview With the Vampire*. He obviously failed to grasp the whole tone of the movie. Funk should watch a movie optimistically, and he shouldn't skip through it 15 minutes at a time, as it seems he did. He perceived this movie extraordinarily wrong. I would also like to ask what he meant when the caption for the picture of the characters Claudia and Lestat said, "Endless Love." I was astonished when he failed to mention the absolutely marvelous, Oscar-caliber performance by rookie Kirsten Dunst—she handled her role as if she were Susan Sarandon or Winona Ryder. The same goes for the wonderful, Oscar-worthy performance by Brad Pitt. This is obviously a five-star film.

Now for Frieda Noone. I

do agree that *Street Fighter* had a poor plot, but I disagree when she disgracefully says that the characters were not interesting! I do believe that she did a better job than her co-worker Funk, but this is outrageous. Again, I believe that she also failed to inform the public of the great rookie performances in this movie by Ming-Na Wen and Kylie Minogue.

I believe that your critics are too tough on movies in this issue—the average rating was 1.5 stars. I think I speak for everyone when I say, "Loosen up a bit, for God sakes!"

LOMBARD KELLY
NEWARK, IL

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Broken Arrow soars

John Woo brings his unique brand of action to Hollywood

Though John Woo has landed at an American studio for only the second time in his career, the Asian action legend has hit the ground running—literally.

Shooting on Fox's *Broken Arrow*, which stars John Travolta and Christian Slater as

the set sharply focused, and they have never let me down," Woo says.

Fox has good reason to have faith in Woo's project—it reunites some of the key players behind the studio's summer-of-'94 smash, *Speed*. *Broken Arrow*'s script, in which a rogue Stealth pilot named Vic Deakins (Travolta) uses a

the term "broken arrow" was explained to him by a military acquaintance. The phrase is Pentagon slang for a lost nuclear weapon—and apparently the misplacing of nukes is not the rare occurrence you'd like to think it is. Yost's military sources told him that in the not-too-distant past, a bomber and its nuclear cargo

mer friend and fellow pilot Riley Hale, battles Deakins on trains, planes and Humvees in an attempt to find the weapon before it can be used to incinerate a city.

Yost says that, like *Speed*, *Broken Arrow* will be an actioner with an attitude. "I'd rather just have fun with the genre, rather than be heavy and brutal."

I enjoy trying to think of everything that could possibly go wrong for the characters in a given situation and then think of really clever ways for them to get out of trouble."

Yost also likes to break with action conventions by giving his female characters no-nonsense attitudes more commonly sported by male stars. Samantha Mathis (*Little Women*, *Pump Up the Volume*) will follow in Sandra Bullock's career-making footsteps by playing a strong Yost heroine, in this case a park ranger who helps Riley navigate some tough terrain in search of the nuke.

Though it's trying to be a new kind of action film, *Broken Arrow* won't be short on classic action set pieces, a specialty of the director of Asian clas-

sics like *The Killer* and *Hard Boiled*. Slater, who turned down a role in *Assassins* for the chance to work with Woo, wasn't daunted by the physical challenges Woo asked of his actors. "I've been training all my life for a part like this," Slater enthuses. ♦



ARROW HEADS: Slater and Travolta go man to man in Woo's airborne actioner

dueling Stealth bomber pilots, wraps in October, but Woo feels confident about making the Dec. 20 release date despite the mad dash through postproduction the moved-up opening will require. "My crew is the best I have ever worked with, and the actors came to

nuclear weapon as part of a plot to extort money from the government, is by *Speed* scribe Graham Yost. And Mark Gordon, who produced the Keanu Reeves blockbuster, is overseeing the new actioner.

Yost says he got the idea for the military adventure when

were lost in the depths of the Sea of Japan for years before they could be safely recovered.

The nuclear weapon in *Broken Arrow* is on American soil, but it's controlled by Deakins, who wants to bring the U.S. military to its knees. Slater's character, Deakins' for-

Studio nabs A-list talent

"Houston, we do not have a problem." That's what Hollywood Pictures executives must have been crowing after they snagged superhot *Apollo 13* director Ron Howard and superstar Mel Gibson for a high-profile action thriller called *Ransom*.

The film tells the story of a Silicon Valley high-tech magnate whose son is abducted. Rather than accede to the hostage-takers' demands, the businessman puts a spin on the proceedings by advertising a reward for the safe return of the boy. *Ransom* is based on a 1956 film of the same name that starred Glenn Ford.

Gibson, who recently directed and starred in *Braveheart*, is no stranger to Disney, which owns Hollywood Pictures. The Aussie star serves as the voice of John Smith in the Mouse House's animated summer blockbuster *Pocahontas*.

Ransom is expected to begin filming later this fall. ♦

Brando gets new co-star

Rob Morrow, who played Dr. Fleischman on *Northern Exposure*, has joined Marlon Brando and Val Kilmer in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, H. G. Wells' grisly tale of genetic experimentation gone awry. Morrow will play Prendick, a civil rights lawyer who crash lands on Moreau's remote island, where the doctor is using gene-splicing techniques in his attempts to turn beasts into people.

In this updating of the classic tale, Brando plays the driven doctor and Kilmer has taken the role of the scientist's assistant, Montgomery. Though the cast is set, the film is currently without a director. Helmer Richard Stanley (*Hardware*) was recently dropped from the project. ♦

CBS retreats from devil

The political campaign to make entertainment more wholesome has already claimed one victim, the new CBS series *American Gothic*.

Network execs got mighty nervous after viewing the premiere of the supernatural series, which depicts a small Southern town where the sheriff just may be the devil himself. The opening scenes screened by CBS suits showed a crazed father smashing his seemingly possessed daughter over the head—and then the sheriff (played by Gary Cole) right-arriving to finish the girl off by twisting her neck with a nauseating crunch. Before a gaggle of critics had a chance to view the premiere at a television-industry convention, the scenes were edited to make them less gruesome, and the sound of the girl's neck popping was taken out.

Leslie Moonves, CBS's new president of entertainment programming, acknowledged that the current political climate affected the executives' decision to tone down the show. "I can't deny that government pressure affects us," he said. Horror director Sam Raimi (*The Evil Dead*, *Dark Man*)—who serves as *American Gothic*'s producer, told *Variety* that he went along with the cuts because he was very sensitive to the violence issue. ♦



HOPPER VS. TORN

In one of the more bizarre developments in recent Hollywood history, a year-long dispute between Rip Torn and Dennis Hopper was almost settled in outer space.

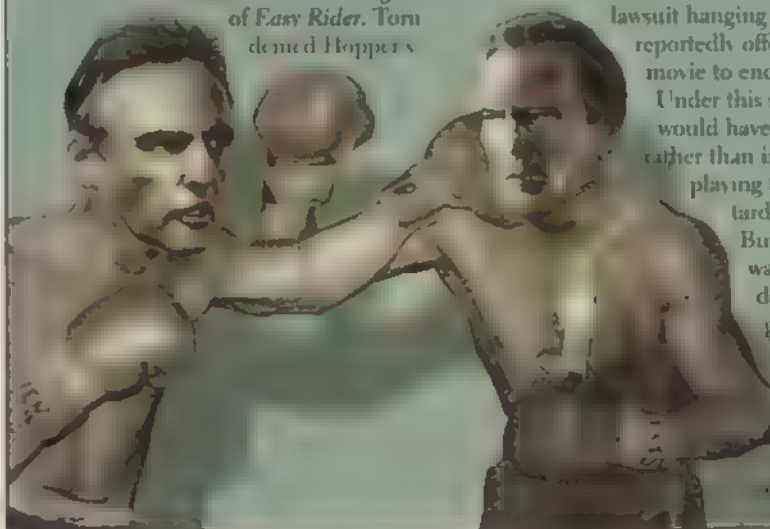
It all started when Hopper claimed that Torn had threatened him with a knife more than two decades ago on the set of *Easy Rider*. Torn denied Hopper's

account and filed a slander suit.

Soon thereafter, though, Torn was reportedly considering dropping the suit—in exchange for a job. Hopper is set to star in producer/director Stuart Gordon's untitled sci-fi project about a cosmic trucker. Perhaps concerned that his star might be distracted with a lawsuit hanging over his head, Gordon reportedly offered Torn a part in the movie to end the legal brouhaha.

Under this scenario, the thespians would have squared off in space rather than in court, with Hopper playing the hero to Torn's dastardly corporate executive.

But alas, the tradeoff wasn't to be. Torn finally decided to go to court as planned, and the sci-fi pic—which also stars Stephen Dorff (*Barbed*) and Debi Mazar (*A. Law*), began taping last month. ♦



DINO NIGHTS



in *Cincinnati's* Fred Willard. Now that's entertainment. How on earth did we miss the first two installments?

According to its press release, it pre-visualized action comedy starring Whoopi Goldberg, a no-nonsense cop who has a junkie-eating 1. Rex for a partner. Despite the can't-miss concept, Whoopi failed to join the production at the last minute (a threatened lawsuit).

It's time to see the film.

It's time to see the film.

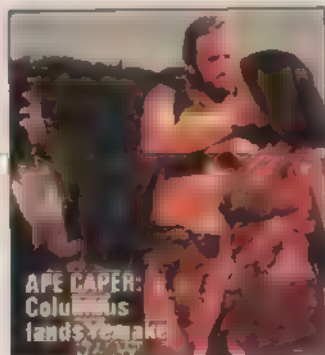
What's the deal with the cinematic concept? Bullock and... rollies?

Columbus battles critics

As reported in the July issue, Chris Columbus is prepping the big-budget remake of *Planet of the Apes*. But the director has more on his mind than monkeys. Perhaps spurred by the scathing reviews of his recent comedy *Nine Months*, the baby-faced director is planning to knock off some film critics—or, screen—that is, Columbus is developing a

remake of *Theater of Blood*, in which the main character slays his reviewers. Some of the withering notices for the Hugh Grant vehicle *Nine Months* have persuaded Columbus to give the film lots of "personal touches" according to insiders quoted in *Variety*.

First up, though, is *Apes*, produced by Oliver Stone. The Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle is expected to go before the cameras some time next year, and Twentieth Century Fox plans to make the film its biggest summer-of-'97 tent pole. Special effects master Stan



APES CAPER: Columbus lands remake

WUNDERBACH, APES'S COORDINATOR

Aliens, *Terminator 2* and next summer's *Island of Dr. Moreau*, is doing the monkey suits for the film. Insiders predict "lots of surprises" for the big-screen remake of the '60s kitsch classic ♦

Will Cruise *Mission* fail?

The latest in a long line of Hollywood nabbits is Paramount's *Mission Impossible*—and we're not referring to the movie's tense action sequences. Like TriStar's *Man of War* and MGM's *Cutthroat Island*—films that have been wandering around the 1995 release schedule like toxic garbage barges in search of landfills—Tom Cruise's much-anticipated spy flick probably won't be able to make its scheduled opening date.

Reports of production problems and local conflicts surfaced last fall when the film was shooting on location in Prague. Now insiders say the film's FX might take longer to complete than originally thought—especially with Cruise, a notorious perfectionist, serving as one of the producers on the film. Though Paramount executives are trying to reassure theater owners that the movie will be ready for Christmas release, it's more likely to appear next summer. ♦

Connery rocks Alcatraz

Sean Connery is going to jail.

The actor will play a prisoner famous for his attempts to escape from maximum-security lockups in an upcoming film called *The Rock*. Connery's character is brought in to assist an FBI agent trying to gain control of Alcatraz Island (a.k.a. The Rock), which has been taken over by terrorists threatening to bomb San Francisco. Nicholas Cage will play the FBI agent who needs Connery's help in getting onto the Rock. ♦



ROCKIN' ROLL: Connery

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Call of the Wild



Planet Hollywood's director of monkeys is about to make a name for himself on Hollywood's development circuit. Tarzan, who started out as the hero of an Edgar Rice Burroughs novel before fronting an MGM serial starring Johnny Weissmuller (right), is going to get the big-screen treatment again, courtesy of Fox Family Films. Director George Cosmatos, who's currently putting the finishing touches on the presidential thriller *The Shadow Conspiracy*, will helm Tarzan's updated adventures in filmdom.

"I want to do it in the vein of Johnny Weissmuller, with a huge canvas, using animals, the forest and the jungle, and create a fantasy world of adventure, which hasn't been done before," Cosmatos recently told the trade papers. "I grew up with those films," he added, "and I've always wanted to do stuff in the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* vein, without taking it too seriously."

Production on Tarzan should begin early next year. ♦

McTiernan's beefy role

Director John McTiernan (*Die Hard*, *Die Hard with a Vengeance*) has decided against helming *Without Remorse*, the Savoy Pictures adaptation of Tom Clancy's best-selling novel. But don't worry about the director—he's got plenty to keep him busy. Cattle are on the director's mind these days. It seems McTiernan's Wyoming ranch has become a major source of "beefalo," a buffalo-bovine hybrid, and the director is thinking of taking the mystery meat to Planet Hollywood outlets around the world in the form of, we kid you not, the Yippie-Kye-Ay-Mother Burger. ♦

HOLLYWOOD

Animal Magic: The latest retro favorite to get the retread treatment is *Doctor Dolittle*, the Hugh Lofting tale that was turned into a 1967 musical starring Rex Harrison. Execs at Twentieth Century Fox say the new live-action version won't have any singing and will target adults as well as kiddies, à la Disney's *Pocahontas*.

Riding a Wave: *Waterworld* scripter David Twohy has signed on to make his directing debut on the Charlie Sheen sci-fi pic *Shockwave*. Twohy told *The Los Angeles Times* that *Waterworld* director Kevin Reynolds agreed to give him a few pointers, "as long as I don't go near water."



Casting Couch, Pt 1: Brent Spiner, who played Lt. Cmdr. Data on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, will join Will Smith, Randy Quaid, Bill Pullman and Mary McDonnell on the set of *Independence Day*, the Earth invasion pic from Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin, the team that brought you *Stargate*.

Casting Couch, Pt 2: Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks* is also in the process of lining up some top talent. Warren Beatty may take the role of the president in the tongue-in-cheek sci-fi tale, and Leonardo DiCaprio, Sarah Jessica Parker and singer Tom Jones are also contenders for parts in the Warner Bros. flick.

Spielberg Attacks: Not to be outdone in the big-budget sci-fi sweepstakes he helped invent, Steven Spielberg may take on *Deep Impact*, a film about a meteor crashing into Earth.

Snake Charm: *Escape From L.A.*, Kurt Russell and John Carpenter's much-anticipated *Escape From New York* sequel, will begin principal photography on the Paramount lot later this month.

Snow Job: While waiting for Fox brass to approve Joss Whedon's draft of the fourth *Alien* saga, Sigourney Weaver has taken the role of the wicked stepmother in Interscope's live-action version of *Snow White*.

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After being stymied
by **Voyager** and its
own uneven storytelling,

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

tries a
Klingon ringer for a full-on
assault on the ratings **by Edward Gross**



ra Steven Behr is annoyed. "I have been inundated with letters and postings on the Internet from people thinking that the addition of Worf is going to change the whole show and result in the elimination of other characters," *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine's* executive producer sighs. "It simply isn't true. I think people should just look at the work we're doing. We've got a couple of really great Worf stories coming up, and we've developed a lot of interesting shows for all of our other characters as well. I just wish people would stop getting so fucking hysterical. We live, eat, sleep and breathe this television show. Do they really think we're going to flush it all down the toilet? It's just so nuts."

Though his exasperation is

understandable, Behr should be glad to be receiving the attention. Fans of the wildly popular *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, which ceased production last year, have always considered *Deep Space Nine* the bastard child of *Star Trek*—an attitude the show's producers hope to change by bringing in the character of Worf (Michael Dorn), who was one of the most popular and identifiable regulars on *TNG*. Launched in 1993 while *The Next Generation* was still on the air and in the pink of condition, *DS9* set out to be different—and its success at being different alienated some die-hard *Trek* fans, whom the show is now trying to woo.

Rather than being set on a starship like the other three *Trek* series (the original '60s show, *TNG* and the newly launched *Voyager*), *DS9* takes place on a space station, where various races are brought together to fight, bluster and flirt. Led by Capt. Benjamin Sisko (Avery Brooks), the resi-

addise found



dents of DS9 serve as a military outpost for the protection of the Federation-affiliated planet of Bajor which recently struggled free from Cardassian rule. The station also serves as a convenient sentry post that allows Starfleet to keep tabs on the nearby wormhole that connects the Alpha Quadrant to the mysterious Gamma Quadrant.

But *Deep Space Nine* isn't content with simply providing adventure stories. Its creators wanted this to be a show about the mysteries of personality rather than the mysteries of outer space. From Bajoran first officer Kira Nerys (Nana Visitor) and the Trill science officer Jadzia Dax (Persi Freni) to the shape-shifting security chief Odo (Rene Auberjonois) and the Klingon businessman Quark (Armin Shimerman), *DS9* offers multilayered, often contradictory people and relationships. None of the heroes and villains can be easily labeled. Though it shows off its sci-fi gadgetry and big-eared aliens, it is a show about exploring the complexities of humanity.

As such, *DS9* is a lot for unprepared TV viewers to digest, resulting in ratings erosion. The media, too, hasn't known what to make of it.



And with the high-profile end of *The Next Generation*, the theatrical release of *Star Trek Generations* and the debut of *Star Trek Voyager*, *DS9* got lost in the mix.

Star Trek is a phenomenon that some people have not always been comfortable with," says Behr. "I think the media has waited for what they perceive to be a weak point in the franchise, something they can kind of gang up on. The bottom line is we live in a media-haunted society, where perception is always more important than

reality. Because the show was perceived as a show about people who don't go anywhere, about a space station that is not off exploring the galaxy, it was perceived as not really being *Star Trek*.

"The fact is," he continues, "for good or ill, we had maybe nine shows out of 26 during the third season that took place on the station. Yet I still read about us being the show that has the setting of an airport lounge where you just wait around for things to happen. Here we joke around that in 10 years, *Deep Space Nine* will become the cult within the cult and people will and say, 'What a weird, different, strange, funky show that was. Look at all the things they were trying to do.' Maybe that will happen, maybe it won't."

Co-creator and creative consultant Michael Piller agrees that *DS9* has been slighted, which he chalks up to the "middle-child syndrome."

There was *The Next Generation*, which was a media phenomenon—there was nothing like it," he offers. "When people realized that it sold magazines, the coverage went crazy. *Deep Space Nine* got a great launch, with a lot of publicity, but then Paramount decided that they wanted to do *Voyager*, so the baby came into the family and took attention away from the middle kid. At the same time, *The Next Generation* ended, which got a great deal of press. And since *Voyager* was getting ready to start, people viewed it as [TNG's] replacement. *Deep Space Nine* just got overlooked. I feel it's been treated unfairly for a show of such quality."

"The show is different from the show that came before it, and it's different from the show that came after it," Behr points out. "Even though people talk about science-fiction fans having vision and being able to embrace the different and the odd and the slightly more esoteric type of show, I don't think that's true when it



THE CHANGELING IN CHARGE

Not to be sacrilegious, but I think we're the *Star Trek* series that might make Gene

Roddenberry spin in his grave," Kennerly observes wryly. "It's very different from the others, and while this show might not bring in the hard-core *Trekker* support, it has brought people to the show who were not initially *Star Trek* fans, and that's very gratifying."

For Kennerly, who portrays the shapely security chief Odo, *Deep Space Nine* offers a fascinating acting experience, for which he gives credit to executive producer (a Steven Behr).

"He has done a remarkable job of not only broadening the whole horizon of ideas in which we deal, but he has also made it a lot more socially conscious than a lot of *Star Treks* have been."

That's one of the things for an actor that makes this type of show interesting to do. Even though it's sci-fi fantasy, it relates very much to what's really going on in people's lives."

The series has also afforded the

actor—who first came to TV viewers' attention as the irritating assistant to the governor on the hit series *Beverly Hills Cop*—the opportunity to direct several episodes.

"Moving into the directing area really keeps me on my toes," he says. "Actually, it keeps me scared shiteless. It's incredibly exciting and very scary at the same time."

But even though he now gets the opportunity to run the whole show from behind the camera, he's still concerned about his on-screen alter ego.

Kennerly's pleased Michael Dorn is joining the series; he adds that he's amazed by the manner that this could mean trouble for his character, since Worf had been the head of security on the *Enterprise*.

"The weird thing for me is that Odo being chief of security is the least important thing that he does as far as I'm concerned. In truth, if you look at the script in detail, Odo is a terrible chief of security. Horrible things happen under his watch. If he were a really good chief of security, nothing very interesting would happen on the show." —K.C.



THE DOCTOR IS OUT:
Behr has a hard day

comes to television. I think people like to find something that's comfortable, and *Deep Space Nine* does not always fit in that way. I think that makes some people uneasy. I really believe that there are a lot of people who don't 'get' the show."

Though the series is ratcheting up the action and adventure, Piller admits that *DS9* was created not as a show about space exploration, but as an interior exploration—a character-based series that deals with issues such as loyalty, commitment, self-awareness, and personal responsibility. "These characters are forced to stay in one place and face the consequences of their actions week after week," he says. "Going on a trip in the Enterprise is like cruising your favorite hangouts on Friday nights. You can always go on to the next one—it's a one-night stand. I would say that *Deep Space Nine* is a much more adult series than any of the other *Star Trek* shows. It's much more psychological and challenging."

Everything we do," interjects Behr, comes back to haunt us six episodes later. Everything is interwoven and interconnected. I keep saying that this is a very fluid show, which is what I like about it. Everything—the relationships, the political ramifications—are all very fluid, everything is constantly changing. I think that's wonderful. The show is alive. That's what's appealing to us as writers.

Former TNG producer Rene Echevarria, who joined the *DS9* staff at the beginning of the third season, was impressed by the richness of characterizations that had been established on *Deep Space Nine*.

"They laid a lot of pipe and I came in at a really great time in terms of a creative flowering," Echevarria enthuses. "To me, these are really fun characters to write. I find them more real than the *Next Generation* characters, who were almost icons. They were having a fantasy life, where, between adventures, they would all do

"Star Trek is a phenomenon that some people are not comfortable with."

They've been waiting for what they perceive to be a weak point in the franchise, something they can gang up on."

—producer Ira Steven Behr

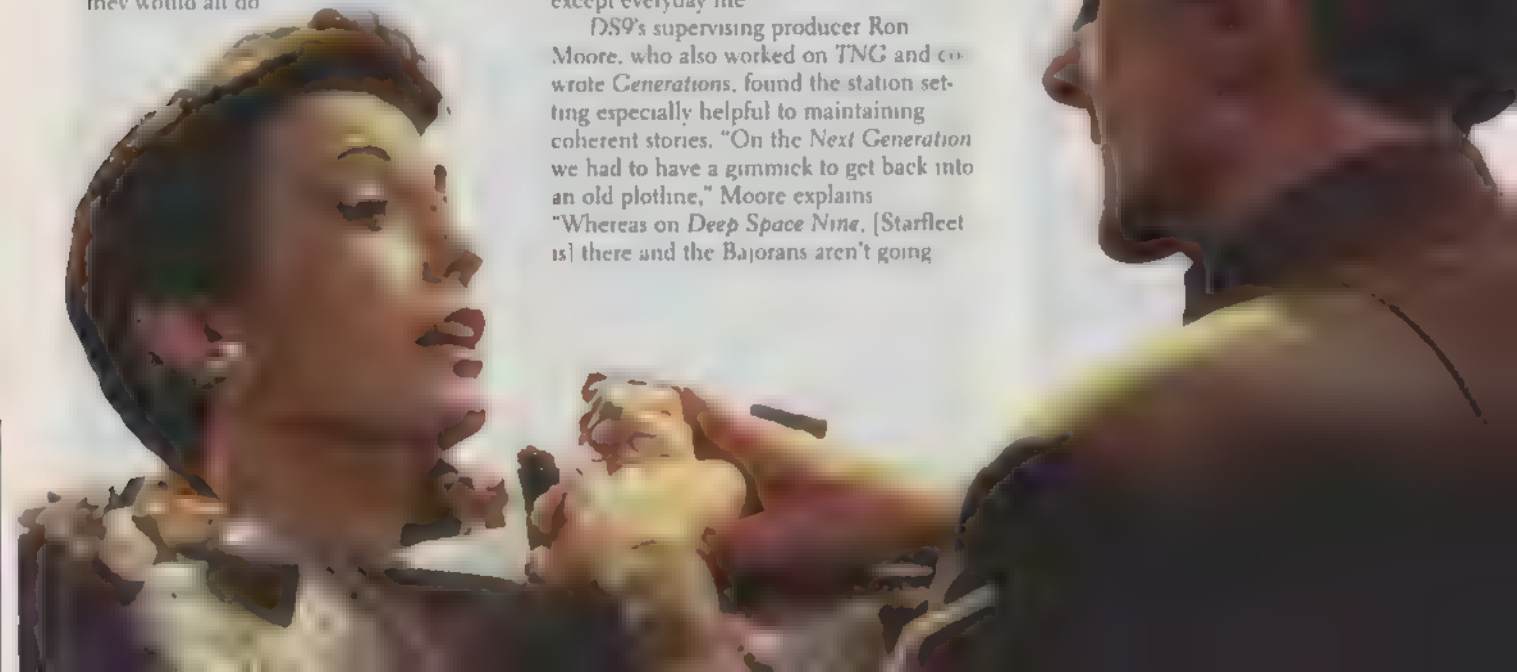
theater. *Deep Space Nine* feels more real to me in terms of the characters and the setting. One of the things I remember talking to Jeri Taylor about when they were developing *Voyager* is that it would be really helpful for the show to have a couple of young guys who are close enough friends that one can drop by the other's room, walk in, say, 'Hey,' flop down on the couch, pick up a newspaper and read for five minutes, then say, 'See you later,' and walk out. On *Next Generation*, you had to have an excuse for someone to stop by another's quarters. You'd write a scene and the notes would say, 'Why is Riker visiting Geordi?' There had to be a reason. Thankfully, there was always the crew evaluation report. On *Deep Space Nine* you find people having coffee together or walking along the promenade. There are so many types of stories you can tell on this show. If this wasn't an action-adventure show for men aged 18-40, we could easily do an entire season on being on a station where nothing much happens except everyday life."

DS9's supervising producer Ron Moore, who also worked on TNG and co-wrote *Generations*, found the station setting especially helpful to maintaining coherent stories. "On the *Next Generation* we had to have a gimmick to get back into an old plotline," Moore explains. "Whereas on *Deep Space Nine*, [Starfleet is] there and the Bajorans aren't going

anywhere. Garak's tailor shop is down the promenade, so any time we feel like it, we can have a Garak show. It just gives us different storytelling abilities. I also like the format of the show. We don't need the Enterprise on a serious mission every week, so we can do shows that are lighter. We can do things that aren't quite like 'Ooh, the Enterprise is investigating a space anomaly.' That would always hamstring us on *Next Generation*. Joe Menosky and I wrote 'In Theory,' the Data romance, and we had to come up with some stupid subspace anomaly that the Enterprise had to be battling at the same time. It was annoying, but that was built into the structure of that show. While you were downstairs with Data, you always kind of wondered what the ship was doing. On *Deep Space Nine* we don't have that looming over our heads all the time, so it expands the kinds of stories we can do."

Though the station itself is fertile ground for storytelling, the show's producers recognized that it was necessary to expand the *Deep Space Nine* universe. Thus, the station is now equipped with the starship *Defiant*, a prototype vessel designed to battle the Borg but now being utilized to fight the Jem'Hadar from the Gamma Quadrant.

But the *Defiant* doesn't just lead the



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EVERYTHING'S PREACHY

There's a lot about *Deep Space Nine* that I find intriguing," says Siddig El Fadil, who portrays the show's chief medical officer, Dr. Bashir.

The dynamics of the series are interesting because a lot of the roles are reversed. Some of the caregivers aren't women but men, and some of the more action-oriented characters are women. That's certainly different, particularly for *Star Trek*.

Feeling that season three was the best so far, Fadil points to the two-part "Past Tense," which takes Bashir and his mates to a point in Earth's past when rampant homelessness threatened revolutions.

"There have been some great shows," he says, "and every once in a while the actors get scripts that make everything worthwhile. I've had my share of them, but 'Past Tense' really meant a lot."

"I think the episode's strength is that it tackles a problem that has gotten out of hand already," Fadil says. "It's not the usual save-the-world or save-the-whales scenario. It's a much more localized problem of homeless people, and what happens when seemingly well-intentioned projects

simplify. I think the show's Sanctuary Districts (where the homeless are concentrated) represent a sociological disaster that is already brewing, and I think it was very important from that point of view. People criticize it as being preachy, but who cares as long as you get the message through."

What the actor especially likes about the show is that—unlike most sci-fi series—*DS9* has fashioned characters who are palpably real. "These people are very true," he says. "Apart from the alien make-up, they are the kind of people you could run into every day. Television characters are often stereotypes with no problems. And if they do have problems, then that's all they have. The characters on *Deep Space Nine* are more fully rounded than that."

"I'm also pleased that Bashir has matured the way that he has over the course of the series," he continues. "That was our idea when the series began. We would start him off wet behind the ears, and then he would grow and develop as a person. And we came through." —E.G.

station's regulars into battle. It can also lead them into self-discovery. In the first two episodes of the third season—"The Search," parts one and two—Odo learns where he comes from. It turns out that he is a member of the Founders, a society of shapeshifters who rule the Gamma Quadrant and look at the so-called "solids" as a threat to them. And the Jem'Hadar are their foot soldiers. Given the opportunity to stay with his people, Odo ultimately chooses to go back to DS9.

We just changed his quest a little bit, explains story editor Robert Hewitt Wolfe. "We took him from someone who wanted to find out who his people were to someone who knew who his people were but still felt lost. A lot of *Deep Space Nine* is about the quest for self-discovery, and I think that the truth of the matter is that there really aren't magical answers to the things people are looking for."

According to Behr, when the writing staff was discussing the Dominion (a.k.a. the Founders), one of their thoughts was that, in the last episode of the series, it would be revealed that Odo was the once and future king of the Founders, who were going to turn out to be shapeshifters. "We always said that with a laugh," says Behr, "because we figured it would be too big a character thing to spring on the audience. But one day Michael [Piller] said, 'I've got a crazy idea. You're all going to think I'm nuts: what if the Founders turn out to be shapeshifters?' We had lunch with Rene Auberjonois to clue him in, and that's how it came down."

Explains Auberjonois, "When I first read the pilot script, even though Odo's character was quite sketchy, the fact that he didn't know where he was from and didn't know if there were any others like him was what was most fascinating to me. When they told me we were going to find out, I was concerned about where the character would go. But I must say that I was and have been very satisfied with the solution they've come up with, which is something equally complex. To me, not only is acting a challenge but the character has to have a challenge to make it interesting to play."

Part of having complex characters in difficult personal and professional situations is that it naturally brings about interpersonal conflict. Ron Moore believes that one of the best things about *DS9* is that the characters can "get in each other's faces" without damaging their overall relationships.

"That was one of the most charming elements of the original *Star Trek*," Moore offers. "Then came *Next Generation*, which took a couple of years to grow on people and has now become one of the icons of *Star Trek*. But those characters were really bland with each other. They loved the shit out of each other, and that

"We joke around that in 10 years, *Deep Space Nine* will become the cult within the cult and people will say, 'What a weird, different, strange show that was.'"

—Ira Steven Behr



got boring to write. We were always desperately trying to find ways to get Riker and Picard into conflict, to have Picard chew Worf out about something. Those were great moments, but they were so rare. When people were criticizing the show, they were always saying, 'The characters are getting along too well, it's all so touchy-feely.' So along comes *Deep Space Nine* with some of that friction—and now people are saying, 'Oh my God, these people are yelling at each other all the time! It's a weird criticism to say that conflict is bad. Conflict is the root of drama.'

And there certainly promises to be plenty of conflict in the fourth season, as the changelings bring a deep-seated paranoia to the station and Starfleet Command. The season three finale, "The Adversary," had Sisko and his crew aboard the Defiant being manipulated by a Founder who is trying to trigger a war. At the end, he ominously lets Odo know that the changelings are everywhere. "It was

meant to be a paranoid, tension-producing show," offers Behr. "It represented an interesting way to use the changelings, making them more of a threat."

That threat is carried over to season four, beginning with the two-hour "Way of the Warrior," in which the treaty between the Federation and the Klingon Empire is on the verge of breaking down thanks to the concerted efforts of the Founders. It is also the episode that reintroduces Worf to the *Star Trek* universe.

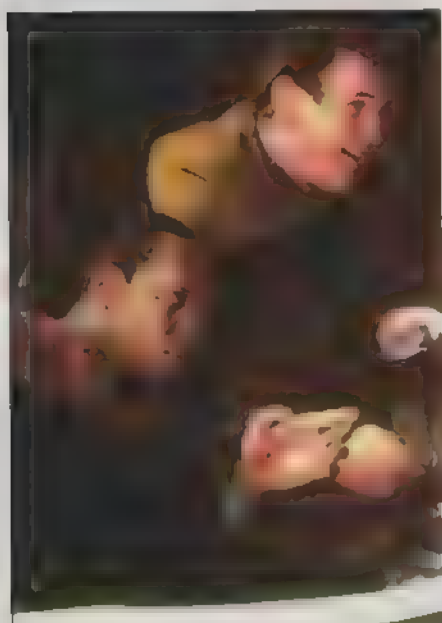
It was very clear to us that the ratings for *Deep Space Nine* had eroded over the last two years, explains Piller. "But we're very proud of the show. We believe it's a very good



DS9 PORTRAITS:

clockwise from top: A Ferengi family reunion, Major Kira, Neelix, and Chief O'Brien

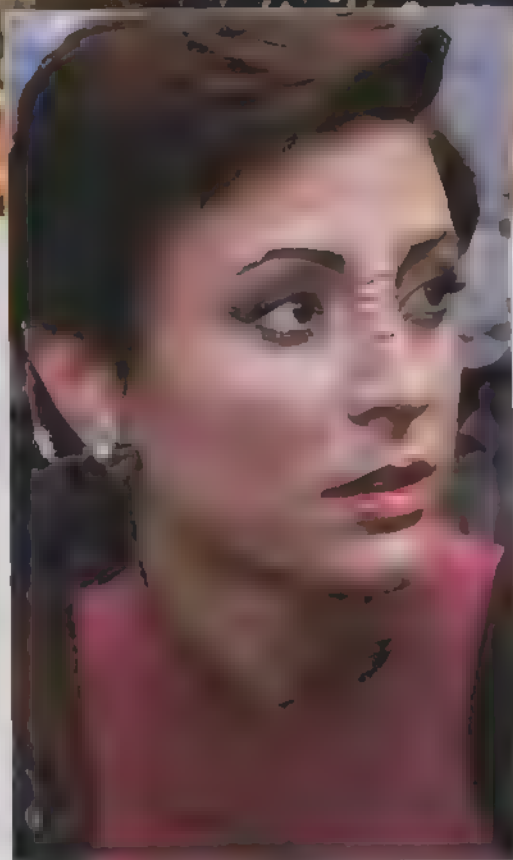
show, but clearly some people have made the decision early on to leave it or not make the time to watch it. We want those people to watch again, so that they will see what a great show it is. This is one of a couple of things we're doing to say, simply, 'Hey, come on back. Check out what we're doing.' With a character as beloved as Worf played by as good an actor as Michael, we thought this would be a very nice addition.



We were thinking of doing a story where the Vulcans pull out of the Federation, and that was how we were going to open the fourth season," says Behr.

Then I watched the tape we have of 'The Die is Cast,' and the line the Founder said. 'The only thing we have to worry about in the Alpha Quadrant is the Federation and Klingon alliance, and that won't be a threat for much longer.' That just leaped out at me. Suddenly the light went off. I called Ron Moore into my office and said, 'You know the line,' which he wrote, 'think about it. Maybe we're making a mistake. Maybe the Vulcans should not be the ones leaving the Federation. Maybe it's the Klingons who should break off diplomatic relations with the Federation. That might have more heat to it.'

Behr brought the idea to Rick Berman. "And Rick said, 'Boing! The Klingons! It's gotta be Klingons,'" says Behr. "We met with Paramount and they said, 'It's okay, but you guys don't under-



stand. We want something even bigger than the Klingons.' Rick said, 'What if we bring Worf along with them?' and they said, 'Boing!'

Negotiations began with Dorn, who says he joined the show because Berman asked him to. "Rick has a way of making me do things just in the way he asks me," laughs the actor. "I've got to be honest, though, when we heard that Next

Generation was coming to an end, I said 'I'm ready for it to be over. I'm ready to move on.' It was scary in that I was suddenly out of work after seven years, but I was prepared for it. It's truly amazing that I'm back. More amazing is that I'm not freaking out about it."

In fact, he seems intrigued by Worf's new position. "Inserting Worf into their universe is going to up the tension level a little higher than it was before," he says. "And it was pretty tense already. The tension that I want to insert into this is the same tension that Worf felt when he first came on the Enterprise—a fish out of water. These are brand-new people, and a lot of them he does not like. But he recognizes rank and privileges, so he does not go too far, though he definitely will let these characters know how he feels. That's the beauty of Worf. All of these things he's not used to seeing, you never know what he's going to do or how he's going to react. His reaction isn't a lot of words, just let me look at you with that glare. He's always pissed."

Of Worf's character arc, Ron Moore notes that "DS9 is a station of people who are all outsiders coming together. They're all people who stand alone among their own. That certainly suits Worf. The character dynamic that we're going for with Worf is that, basically, following the destruction of the Enterprise [in the feature, *Star Trek Generations*], his home was destroyed. He had a home and a family there for seven years and then it was taken away from him, which has brought about a re-evaluation of his life. In the opening episode, he'll be talking about going back to Borath, the place we established where there are Klingon clerics and religious monks. He wants to go there to check out his life and see what he wants to do."

"We're picking up a Worf who doesn't have a direction," he adds, "who doesn't know what he wants to do next. There is no new starship Enterprise yet. He doesn't have a clear goal that he wants to accomplish anymore. Basically he will decide that he wants to go into command, so he will be wearing the red uniform. He wants to be a captain some day. I think we can get into darker territory with Worf on DS9 than we could on *Next Generation*. Some of the fun of this season will be his adjusting to the station, bumping into some of the stranger conventions of *Deep Space Nine*. It ain't a starship, and it doesn't run like one. What's with the Ferengi bartender-smuggler-thief-criminal that everyone seems to put up with? We haven't figured out all the relationships yet, but there is a tie between Worf and Odo. Obviously, Odo is the chief of security, and Worf used to be security. At the same time, I think there is an interesting contrast between Odo and his notion of justice, and Worf, who stands for honor. Sometimes those



CAPTAIN SISKOL DO WE PRESUME?

Among all of the military people he's talked with, executive producer Ira Steven Behr, believe that Benjamin Sisko is the closest *Star Trek* has come to presenting a realistic commander.

"He is the leader," says Behr. "He is the guy in command, and there is, at first, a line between him and the people who serve under him. We erase that line somewhat in this [new] season, because after two-and-a-half years, you need to keep everything fluid. Now there will be a scene where you'll see Avery playing darts with Chief O'Brien, which you never would have seen at the beginning of the series."

"Originally," he continues, "Sisko's character always seemed to be based on negatives. He lost his wife, he didn't want the command, etc. Now that's

changed and we're more into Sisko as a builder. In one episode he said that he used to dream about being captain, but that's not true anymore. Earth used to be home for him, but now home is DS9. I think all of those little things are helpful to building the character."

And finally, season three saw Sisko's promotion from commander to captain.

"We should have made him a captain long ago," says Behr. "Just making him captain is going to change a lot of fans' perception of him. I know it sounds silly, but we're no longer the junior show. We are as much the franchise as *Voyager* is at the moment, and he deserves to be captain."

adds Ron Moore. "We were getting a little irritated when everyone was talking about the captain of *Star Trek* and didn't mention Sisko. Now they don't have an excuse anymore." —E.G.

concepts are closely-tied together, but they can also conflict with each other.

For his part, Dorn is looking forward to the new challenges the series will afford him. "I think it's going to be totally different than *Next Generation* because Worf's world is gone, and that's going to be an interesting acting choice for any actor. You've got to play a guy who's just lost. Before, he had his comrades around him at least he was on the best ship in the galaxy, and he had the opportunity to fight and be honorable. But DS9 is like a station in Alaska or something. He doesn't consider it a punishment, but it's not the choicest assignment either. I think he's going to be able to bring a lot of different things we definitely haven't seen yet. It's all very exciting.

Although not too much is being revealed about the fourth season at this point, Echevarria does point out that the Founder threat will certainly be a continuing theme in the series. Demonstrating their impact, he points to the episode "Way of the Warrior" and a scene in which a Klingon boards DS9 and demands a meeting with Sisko and Kira, saying that he possesses important information. "There's a great scene early on," he offers, "where the Klingon says, 'Let us see that we are who we say we are and—because shapeshifters don't bleed—he slices his hand open and bleeds on the table. So Sisko and Kira have to do it as well. They have to prove they are who they say they are, or the Klingon won't talk. So it's something we'll keep alive, but we'll be careful not to overdo it."

Wolfe admits he's enthusiastic about the sense of paranoia that will accompany the shapeshifters' infiltration.

Hopefully, people were surprised by some of the events of "The Adversary," he muses. "When you're dealing with shapeshifters, paranoia is the natural thing to play. I think paranoia is one of humanity's scarier emotions, and it's good to remind ourselves of that once in a while."

Claiming that he's not paranoid about DS9's future, Piller peers at *Next Generation*'s history. "People look at the third season as a season of

great growth," he says, "but if you go back and look at the actual hard numbers, it wasn't until the premiere of the fourth season and the excitement of the first *Star Trek* cliffhanger that it really started to become a phenomenon. I totally expect this fourth season of *Deep Space Nine* to create some of the same excitement and interest that came about with the fourth season of *Next Generation*."

As far as Behr is concerned, it may be the next generation of fans that appreciates all of the creative effort that has gone into

the series. "If you think people are writing a lot of articles and college papers on *TNG*, wait until they sit back and take a look at all the stuff on *Deep Space Nine*," he says. "All of the political situations, the social situations, the personal interaction. If that's your nice bowl, if you actually care enough to treat it seriously, there is just acres of stuff to pick over and study. All kinds of little facets in each jewel."

Behr pauses for a moment, then adds—half-seriously— "I just hope I'm not too old to enjoy it when it happens." ♦



"Deep Space Nine is a much more adult series than any of the other Star Trek shows. It's much more psychological and challenging."

—co-creator Michael Piller

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interpersonal conflict going, which would be a given with a crew facing their dilemma, then we're in good shape. They have nine splendid actors on the show. There's no reason why we can't go all the way—and that attitude fills everybody with a great sense of enthusiasm. It's also very exciting when we're creating on a daily level something that you think is superior. And I feel so privileged to play the captain that it probably colors everything I do on the set. When you have this kind of respect for a character, it has a profound impact on everyone. They know that I'm not playing around. If I'm going to be here for five more years, I want it to be a very serious evolution into some pretty important, dramatic prime-time television.

You don't want to be running in circles, creating the same types of situations over and over again.

on any other relationship. I view her as an ongoing challenge, as sort of a laboratory of varied emotional proportions and levels. Of course, I work very hard on her technical [knowledge] as well, because that doesn't come naturally to me. Thank God I was born with the ability to retain information. That's a gift. I want the language that emanates from Janeway—the technobabble, as they call it—to come with an ease and an eloquence that would be natural to a leader like this. And that can be very hard to do. I also work hard on her interpersonal relationships; they are a joy to work on, because I do in fact share really great chemistry and camaraderie with all my fellow actors here.

At the beginning, everyone seemed uneasy—and somewhat stiff—on the

It was almost instantaneous, and I think the circumstances lent themselves to instant support. After Genevieve Bujolet left, we needed to succeed quickly. We needed to pull together in a way that most companies don't have to. They allow themselves to grow into relationships at a slower pace. We didn't have that luxury, and it stood us in good stead that we didn't. We worked quickly, we worked very well—I had great support and vice versa, and it's gone on to really deepen. I like every one of them enormously and trust them implicitly.

Voyager producer Jeri Taylor said, "Not only is Kate Janeway the captain of the crew but of the cast as well, and she has such a high standard that she sets the collar of everybody else's work."

What a nice thing to say. I hope so, because it is my hope that I can help this show gain critical acclaim—meaning dramatic depth and texture. Not that it has been lacking before, but I think we have to watch out for the science-fiction and hardware aspect of the show. With our opticals, our graphics, we could get lost in the look. I would rather get lost in the compelling drama of this family caught in this capsule together. I think the only way to do that is to risk doing something new every day, something that is sort of scary but that enhances the [performances of] the people who are there and raises the stakes critically.

That makes me think of an episode called "Prime Factors," which featured the sybaritic alien who had the technology to send the Voyager crew home but refused to do so. The show itself is just okay, but the final moments where Janeway thinks Tuvok has betrayed her make it memorable.

That is exactly my point, and very astute of you to have chosen that scene. I remember it very clearly and I agree with you. I would like to see scenes like that as the norm rather than the exception. As long as they keep the

That's right. And I don't want shoot-'em-ups. I want intrigue, guts, drama and mystery. I don't see why those things wouldn't be possible. But it takes everybody working together, and we do. I think this season you'll see more of that.

One of most interesting things about Star Trek always has been its willingness to explore weighty social issues. You did the episode "Phage" where Janeway is both repulsed by and sympathetic to the dying alien and what they're going to survive.

It nipped my heart in two. If they can write like that, keep it up. Even if you end every other episode with a beauty like that it's important, because this is the essence of what we're trying to do on the show. I have to respect who these creatures are. It is Janeway's M.O. to get under the skin of these alien people, to understand and embrace them as a race equal to her own. She is an ardent scientist. Her view is magnanimous and it's large, and when it comes to this kind of a terrible conflict, in which someone on my ship might actually be fatally affected by a decision she could make, you have to see her moral dilemma. It should be excruciating. I think that one paid off. You get the script, you set up the scene, you could shoot it in an hour. I always just say, "Let's go for it. Let's go all the way. So what if it takes four hours?" This

is difficult but it's the heart of this show." So I try and pick my moments

Do you think this show is a good platform to explore complicated themes?

I think this is the perfect forum for it. Particularly the moral issues, which are always so splendid to approach

In some ways, though, the newer *Star Trek* incarnations have less of that element, though the episode "Voyage" was a brilliant examination on and metaphor for the AIDS epidemic.

Right. I'd love to see it developed further. If we can do that and still keep it a good action show, we will have succeeded on the two most important levels. I think we need a lot of Away Team planetary investigations. I'd like to head a lot of those teams. I don't want to sit in my chair. I'm not a sitter. This is the biggest difference between Janeway and the other captains: she's not fond of staying on the bridge. She's intensely inquisitive by nature and it is her longing as a scientist to be the first to investigate every nook and cranny. But they need to do a lot of other character development, too. There was a great deal of time spent on establishing Janeway last season, and I think we need to get to who Tom Paris really is, as well as Harry Kim, Chakotay and the others

It's nice to hear that you're not always asking, "What's the current thing on this show?"

It loses so much if it's not a family drama. Janeway may be leading the ship, but these are the people for whom she is responsible and who lend the ship its very life. Without them and their development, there isn't much there. Nobody wants to watch *The Kathryn Janeway Show*. This is an ensemble piece, and as long as I get fed, it will be fine

The repertoire on this show is similar in many ways to the original series. There's a moment in one episode where, in the middle of the action, Trvek says he knew Janeway would react a certain way, and she says, "How did you know?" and his response is, "After observing you for so many years, I have come to realize ..." That moment was right out of the *Enterprise* playbook.

It's very important. This is what makes people connect and what's going to make them really invest in the characters. I don't think anybody turns on the show because they want to learn how the plasma fields around some nebula are affecting the ship. People want humorous and dramatic interplay between the characters. I'd love to see some thing explored between Chakotay and Janeway, a conflict of some kind

It's ripe for it, isn't it?

It should be. This is a Maquis warrior we're dealing with here, and I would like to see that color brought forth. Perhaps it should be even as serious a confrontation as him

countermanding one of Janeway's orders

So you think that a lot of the conflict set up in the previous season is to be explored here?

That's right. I think they need to do that this year. They have so many things they have to do with the show, and, you know, the big word is budget

But for that kind of dramatic work you don't need big budgets.

That's what I'm saying. They can do bottle shows with great success. You take me off the bridge for a minute, put Chakotay in command and have him countermand an order and you've got a drama. I come back, "What's going on?" and you find out who they really are in a beautiful ready-room scene. I think people would love seeing how something like that is resolved

Overall, I'm very inspired about this year. I was watching and comparing shows the other day. We've grown, no question about it, but I've got a long way to go. Oh, man, so long to go. I had to turn it off before I threw up. I really feel that way. I have so much to learn, so much to give her

Will you always feel that way?

with Picard; it just wasn't fun anymore.

My metaphor is the love affair. You've got to keep the thing alive creatively. In that situation, I've got to go to the writers then don't I? I have to let the writers come to me. And I've got to take risks without anybody's approval and just see what happens. But I think the order of the day is to simply make her work on the bridge work and her work as a scientist really as interesting as possible so that viewers sense that she is thinking and feeling something about all of these words that are coming out. That's what you're looking for, not everybody at their consoles barking out a bunch of technical terms that nobody cares about. What's going on underneath is what's going to make this thing fly

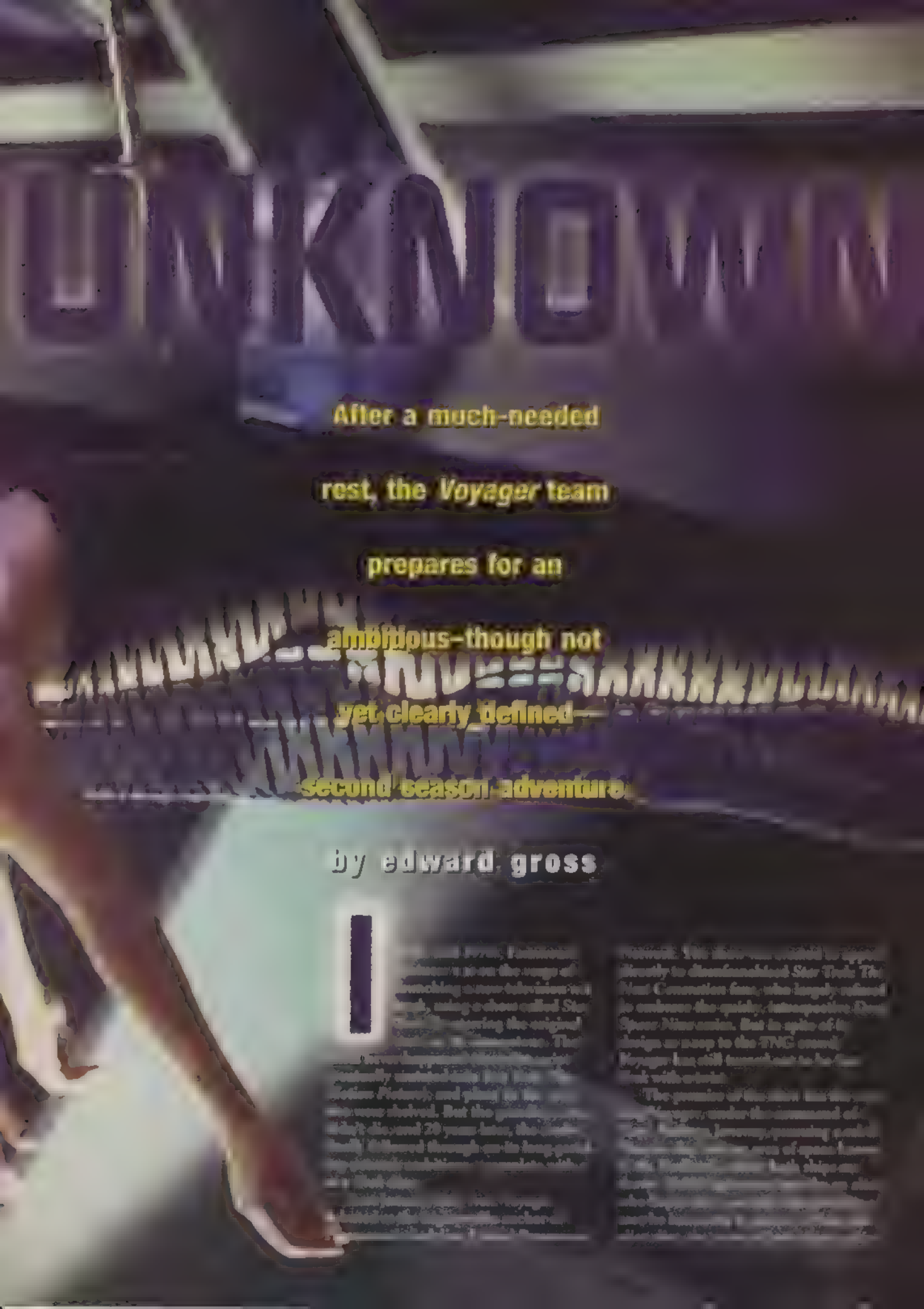
It seems that this is the perfect role and the perfect show for you.

I would have to say that I doubt it's going to get too much better than this. I am really extremely happy on all levels in my life. It's a remarkable time. Last year was a seminal year for me. I've said it a million times and it doesn't feel old yet—I feel blessed, and I aim to keep it that way. ♦



INTO THE





UNKNOWN

After a much-needed

rest, the *Voyager* team

prepares for an

ambitious—though not
yet clearly defined—

second season adventure

by **edward gross**

In 1976, Paramount Pictures was on the verge of launching a new television network, using a show called *Star Trek* to attract the original audience of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. The network was shelved. But the project was revived 20 years later, the network followed through on its long-term plan to launch a new television network, and *Star Trek: Voyager* was born.

The show was created by *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* director James Cameron, who largely refused to embrace the quirky, introspective *Next Generation* series. But in spite of its design as a step to the TNG crowd, *Voyager* has still turned out to be a show with a twist.

The premise of the show has been simple: a *Voyager*, under the command of Captain Janeway, pursuing a comet that has crashed on a planet of space junk.

they must put aside their differences and work together to get back home—a journey that will take them a minimum of 70 years at maximum warp

Producer Rick Berman, who co-created the series with Michael Piller and Jeri Taylor, says they wanted *Voyager* to maintain the best features of the original series and *TNG*—and also be unique. First of all the show would allow conflict and confrontation between the starship regulars, which was something the late *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry had always opposed. "Conflict is what drives drama," says Berman. "So, without breaking Gene's rules, we're always trying to find ways of creating conflict. This show features the inherent conflict between Capt. Janeway's crew and that of the Maquis vessel the *Voyager* was chasing. The Maquis become

provisional Starfleet officers when they come aboard the *Voyager*, but there will always be conflict between them, and that gave us something new

Making such conflict work says Jeri Taylor, required characters that the audience understood and truly cared about. "The *Next Generation* characters were deeply beloved," she points out "and the obstacle we faced when we created *Voyager* was, 'How do we create fresh, interesting characters that haven't been done before in the previous three series? We spent a lot of time in development working on that, and I'm pleased that we came up with really unique and interesting people. We're hoping to capture both the

spirit of camaraderie and some of the action elements of the original series. I think *Next Generation* was a slightly more buttoned-down approach to space travel."

Fundamental to the series' premise was the removal of Starfleet Command and the Alpha Quadrant from the show's stories, thus providing a fresh canvas upon which adventures could be sketched. "The Alpha Quadrant was getting too much like Mr. Roger's Neighborhood," muses Taylor. "It was very cozy, very comfortable and you knew everybody. That sense of the unknown, of the wonder and the excitement of discovery wasn't necessarily there. So it's our responsibility to populate the Delta Quadrant with fascinating new aliens that eventually will be just as interesting to the audience as the Klingons are now.

"That's a commitment we've made for the second season," interjects Michael Piller, "to really open up and meet the aliens and the canvas of this quadrant. We met the Kazon last year and we have been formulating quite a deep investigation into their culture, which will turn them into one of the top five adversarial alien races in *Star Trek's* history.

Most unique about *Star Trek: Voyager* however, is its captain, Kathryn Janeway.

"It's something we felt it was time to do and it gave us a new direction," Berman says of *Trek's* first female lead. "Gene Roddenberry was never averse to the idea of having female captains in guest roles. But this was something that we never did get a chance to discuss with him. Jeri, Michael and I all agreed when we took this on that



CASTING CALL: The doctor, Kes and Neelix in sickbay (left); Tuvok and Janeway prepare for action (below)



it was the next logical step for us. I'm sure Gene would agree."

In the series' gestation period, there was probably more attention drawn to the fact that a woman would be captain than any other aspect of the show. For actress Kate Mulgrew, who has ultimately chosen for the role of Janeway, this was not a shock.

"I'm not even remotely surprised," she says matter of factly. "This is the human condition. It's a novelty. I think that it piques a mass kind of curiosity and it's very typical of our nature as human beings. I do suppose that one has to always refer to the gender in this regard. I am a woman and that lends itself to maternity, to compassion, to warmth—to a lot of qualities that our culture has encouraged in women. Men, of course, enjoy [those qualities] and reveal them as we do, but I think that women are encouraged to reveal them and express them more. I think I've been able to take this character into greater dimensions emotionally as a woman than a male captain would feel free to do. I think that's the best way to put it."

Still, the success of Mulgrew in the lead role is probably surprising to some, considering that she replaced the better-known actress Genevieve Bujoild, who offered an unexpected interpretation of the character before suddenly quitting after only a few days on the set. The show's producers, however, had no doubts about the woman they finally got for the role. "Genevieve had a certain approach to the role that was very low key and—who knows?—it might have been effective," says Taylor. "Kate immediately had a very solid sense of command and authority, and it really seemed like the way to go. Considering that Kate came in after it had already started shooting, she was astonishingly good and professional. She is the captain not just of the crew but of the cast as well. She is so professional and so prepared that everyone is afraid not to be as prepared as she is. Nobody is late because she's never late. Everyone knows their lines because she always knows her lines. She's got such a high standard that she sets the caliber of everybody else's work, and that was obvious from the first day."

Also obvious from that first day was that this cast—Mulgrew, Tim Russ, Robert Beltran, Roxann Biggs-Dawson, Ethan Phillips, Robert Picardo, Robert Duncan McNeill, Garrett Wang and Jennifer Lien—came together as a unit remarkably quickly. The "family," as Mulgrew refers to her *Voyager* cast comrades, became comfortable with one another on camera in a way that took the previous *Star Trek* shows at least a full season.

"We had a very good year," proclaims Piller, "and the most rewarding part of it all is the ease with which the characters came alive, found their voices and found their relationships. The actors are wonderful. I



"I think I've definitely been able to take this character into greater dimensions emotionally than a male captain would feel free to do."

—Kate Mulgrew

think we learned from our mistakes on *Deep Space Nine* and, to a lesser extent, on *Next Generation* that we needed to immediately find these people as individuals and as a crew. And it's paid off handsomely."

Getting there, according to writer Brannon Braga, who had been on the staff of *Next Generation*, was an interesting process. "The first few weeks were me, [Jen Taylor] and Michael [Piller] getting together each day and brainstorming. Who are these people? Where are we going to take them? What are the little narrative arcs we can take them through during the first season? All very basic things. During those five weeks, the one character we didn't really talk about was the ship's holographic doctor [played by Robert Picardo]. We didn't know what the hell we were going to do with him and we were terrified. This guy wasn't going to have anything to

do because he's stuck in sickbay. He's going to be neglected. What a drag. As it turned out, though, out of all the characters, he's the best one so far. But you never know how things are going to turn out. I was writing scripts for this show before it was even cast. I didn't know what these people looked like, which was a challenge but you just have to go with it. When the actors come in, you get a better feel for speech patterns. Once Kate Mulgrew was cast, for example, I had someone I could imitate just like I did with Picard. I take the voice and it helps me write.

Executive story editor Kenneth Biller points out that one of the greatest challenges was simply meeting the high expectations that accompany any new *Trek* show.

"What gets forgotten," he says, "is that while the franchise has been around for a long time, this is a whole new show with a



SPARE PARTS: A dying race of aliens hoisted Neelix's lungs in "Phage"

a lot of people out there who watch the show. When you say, 'I'm on *Star Trek*,' people immediately tune in to you. Even if they've never seen the show before, they know it; they know what it's about. And that is really incredible."

Roxann Biggs-Dawson, who plays the human-Klingon hybrid chief engineer B'Elanna Torres, has also seen a remarkable response from people, including her family. "When I first brought a picture home to my parents and showed them a Polaroid of a test make-up of B'Elanna, my father started laughing hysterically. He said, 'Who got you this job?' And now I go home and he shoves about 10 pictures in front of me to sign before I even say hello. So it's really changed my relationship with him."

In its inaugural season, *Star Trek Voyager* presented a series of episodes that established what the show wants to be. The pilot, "Caretaker," efficiently set up the premise of the series—a starship with a confrontational, makeshift crew that is removed from the guidance and constraints of Starfleet Command. "When we started the pilot," says Piller, "I felt that after all the psychological stuff we had done on *Deep Space Nine*, we could let loose and have a wild ride and adventure with this. My push on the pilot was to let it all hang out in a real old-fashioned adventure story. I think we accomplished that pretty well. A necessary evil of pilots is exposition, but thankfully we had done a lot of backstory on *The Next Generation* and *Deep Space Nine* with the Maquis and their situation." With the backstory done and characters introduced, they could then move on to the meat of episodic storytelling.

Episode four, "Phage," for example, showed viewers that this really was a different world from the Alpha Quadrant, bringing the *Voyager* into contact with an alien race that must steal body organs to fight a disease that eats away at their bodies and their organs. At the end of the episode, Janeway confronts the leader of the aliens, both horrified by what they do to other living creatures and sympathetic to their needs. "That episode," says Braga, "was the first time that everything came together just right: the directing, the music, the actors and—*Voyager* really started hitting its mark."

Adds Taylor, "We thought the idea of a race that does unspeakably horrible things, but does them simply to survive, was a very complex kind of agenda. We love it when our adversaries are not one-dimensional villains, but have attitudes and textures and layers to them. We thought Janeway was put in a real dilemma when she realized what she was dealing with. In fact, Kate Mulgrew was,

whole new set of characters and a premise that has its own set of complications and difficulties. I think in the first year we did some really great episodes and others that weren't quite as great, and I think that's true of any show. We recognize *The Next Generation* as a wonderful show with some of the best stuff done on television in a long time, but it's because we only really remember the best episodes. I think when people look back at the first season of *Voyager* and the one coming up, there will be a few episodes that you can look back upon as being really good *Star Trek* and really good television."

Though not all of the first-season shows should be sealed in a time capsule, the series was certainly good enough to make *Voyager*'s actors into television stars

and welcome members of the *Star Trek* fan phenomenon.

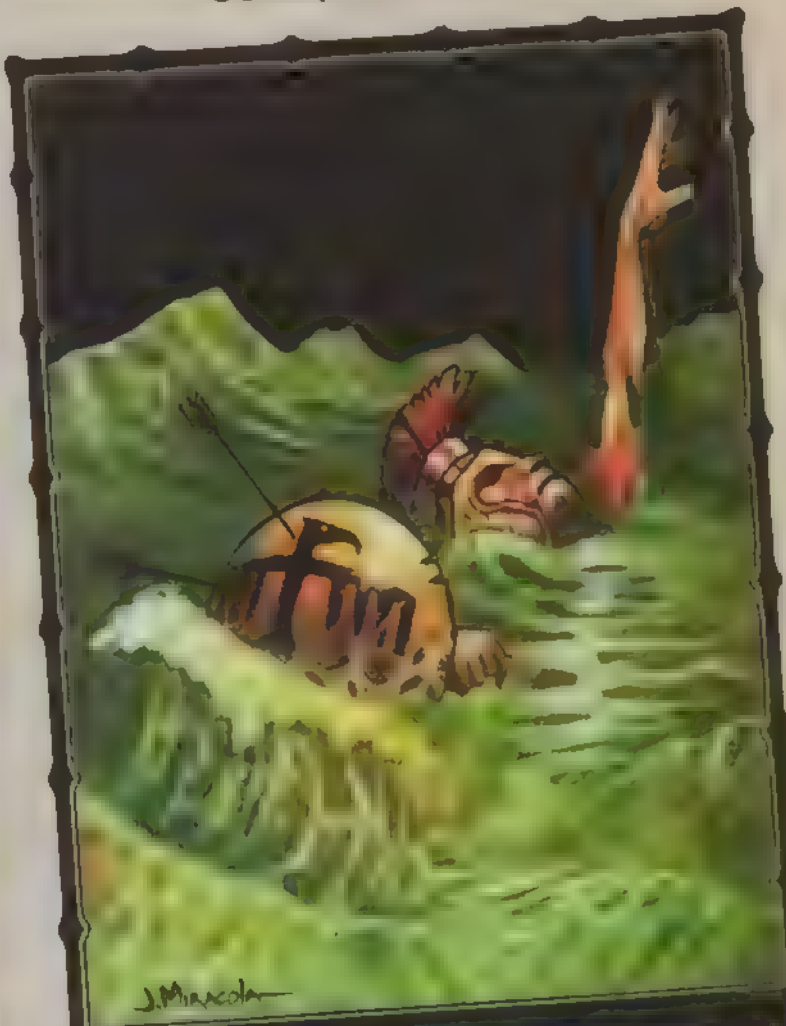
"The conventions were very interesting to me," reveals Mulgrew. "I mean, you're carried on this cloud of such love and support. It's quite extraordinary. But the attention has only affected me in an extremely positive way, because I love Janeway so much. I can't wait to get to work."

Tim Russ, who portrays the stoic Vulcan Tuvok, says he is endlessly surprised by the reaction he gets from people—particularly friends who have "come out of the closet" to admit that they are *Star Trek* fans. "I had no idea that they watched the show at all," he says with a laugh. "And I kept getting responses from my family members that were the same thing. That was the most striking thing to me, that I noticed there are

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Energy

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herself, fighting tears when that scene was being shot. She was so genuinely affected by the story of that race that she was really fighting not to break down. That was an episode that delivered on all counts.

After establishing the premise and the uniqueness of the galaxy they were in, "Eye of the Needle"—episode six—reminded viewers that this crew was lost and desperately wanted to return home. The show had Voyager make contact via wormhole to the Alpha Quadrant. The recipient of their signal is a Romulan commander who is ultimately willing to help them, but then they learn that he actually exists 50 years in their past. "It's a neat story," enthuses Piller. "The mysterious voice on the other end of the phone is always a great hook. A real good story in which the characters all have a personal stake."

Adds Biller, "That feeling of having the brass ring in your hand and then losing it is really moving. We haven't shied away from showing the darker, sadder side of the predicament these people are in."

For her part, Taylor notes that she loves writing "people" shows, and this one fit the bill. "I enjoyed the building of this arc between Janeway and the Romulan commander, which began with his doubt, skepticism and weariness and built into a relationship and closeness—and almost a friendship. The idea that by the end he was almost our champion was a lot of fun. But the truth is, we didn't want to see too many faces from the Alpha Quadrant. We felt we needed to have people out there and alone."

Though such high-quality shows tagged the series as an immediate success, there were a few negatives as well. First, the season only had 15 episodes, resulting in a high number of reruns and, in turn, a drop in the ratings. Four episodes that had been designed to wrap up year one were held back for the second season.

"It's very important to note that we didn't hold back any of the episodes, UPN did," explains Taylor. "It's important that people

understand that there is a significant difference at this point between the network and the studio. The studio produces the television series and the network buys it and runs it as they would from any other studio. The network has control over when and how they schedule the episodes. We, Paramount and the studio were not in accord with that decision to hold back episodes, but it was UPN's right to do so. I was uncomfortable with it because all the feedback I've gotten is that people were distressed with the high number of reruns during the season—by summer, we were having the third run of some shows, giving the impression that there is no fresh programming, no fresh

ideas. I would much rather they had used those extra four episodes to provide more new programming, so the audience wouldn't feel the show had gotten stale in its first season. Also, we had planned those four shows as a bridge that would take us out of the first season on a triumphant note and into the second season. As it was, the season just ends.

Explaining the network's point of view, UPN president Lucie Salhany says that they wanted the second season of *Voyager* to begin at the end of August. "I didn't want to wait until the middle of September when all the other networks—the big networks—are premiering. In order to do that, we needed



ALL ABOARD: In the second season, the producers promise there will be more exploration of secondary characters like Neelix (left) and Harry Kim (above)

to hold some episodes back. The shows that we held back would have run in June and July. They would not have run earlier because they wouldn't have been done. So, we've had some reruns. We knew that was going to happen."

Perhaps a more serious negative, however, were the similarities between some of the *Voyager* storylines and those in previous *Star Trek* series, particularly the original. That common criticism from fans particularly rankles the creative staff.

"Most of us are not that familiar with the original series," says Taylor. "I think you know that there are only so many stories in the universe and what's important is the way they're told. And we wanted to return to the original series in the sense of being out in the unknown—that's the reason we put them in the Delta Quadrant, to get away from the familiarity. That was a conscious attempt to rekindle that sense of adventure. But in terms of storylines, we try to tell fresh stories as uniquely as we can."

"There have been over 350 hours of *Star Trek* produced," adds Berman, "and I would challenge anybody to come up with a story that would not relate in some way to one of those 350 stories. There's always going to be similarities among 50-minute stories about a group of people on a space ship. We've come up with stories that we all like, and then we later discover, 'My God, that's episode 24 of the original series, called 'The Blossoms of Kataria 3,' or something like that, and none of us ever saw it. The potential of similarity is always there when you have so many episodes.'"

Along with fresh stories, the chief focus of season two will be character work and providing different types of shows. "We tended toward the end of the season to do more internal, contained, on-the-ship shows and didn't deliver the kind of action, excitement and new aliens that we would have liked," says Taylor. "The reason for that, frankly, is that we did a lot of expensive shows early on and overextended our budget. We have to come out even at the end of the year, so we had to do some bottle shows that would bring the budget back down again. Our goal this year is to provide the action and the production values, but to scatter it throughout the season rather than front-loading it."

Despite such shortcomings, the staff is proud of what they accomplished in year one and look forward to improving as the series continues. "They're not all winners," says Braga of the first season's episodes, "but all of them are pretty damn close. There's not a single episode that I'm embarrassed about. I admit that we have too many shows about planets with people that look just like humans. I feel that one of the promises of this premise—and one we're hoping to deliver on—is that we should be *The X-Files* of *Star Trek*: expect the weirdest, blackest, most dangerous shit you can imagine." ♦

"We wanted to return to the original series in the sense of being out in the unknown—that's the reason we put them in the Delta Quadrant. That was a conscious attempt to rekindle that adventure."

—Producer Jeri Taylor





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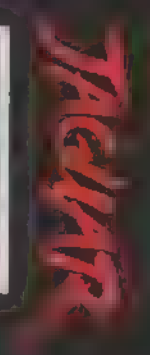
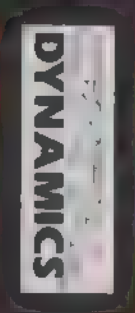
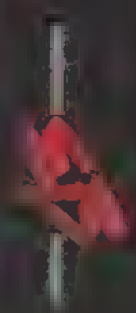


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Already a critical
and cult success,
Strange Days
director Kathryn Bigelow
is looking to break
through to the
mainstream. Can a
deadly dance party with
Ralph Fiennes and Angela
Bassett make her...



After experiencing the harrowing killing with the clip, Lenny starts searching for the murderer. "He has to find the killer because he's concerned that it's someone he knew and because he will obviously be a suspect in the murder," Jaffe says. Lenny's journey takes him on a trek through the seamy underside of near-future L.A., culminating at a wild New Year's Eve "rave" party where thousands of revelers are celebrating the arrival of the millennium.

It's about a character caught in a vortex that's not of his own making. Bigelow says of Lenny's nightmarish journey: But the cautionary tale contained in *Strange*

Days is no mere Hitchcockian parable of paranoia. Part of Lenny's redemption—says the director, depends on the character's ability to accept and understand his emotions. "On the surface, Lenny comes across as someone very much in control. He's someone who can sell you anything you can imagine, yet he can't even help himself. He's someone who's at the mercy of his own emotions, yet he spends all of his time satisfying other people's [needs]."

Finding an actor with the range and subtlety to play the conflicted hero had promised to be a daunting ordeal, says Bigelow. "I wanted someone who didn't carry too much baggage—someone whom the audience would not have preconcep-

tions about—and I wanted someone who can reveal a kind of vulnerability. It's not just about posturing. I wanted someone who could deliver something very complicated and very heartfelt in the context of an action flick. It's not like there's a lot being asked of the character, and I knew I needed someone very smart to pull it off." A tall order, to be sure. But as it turned out, Bigelow had seen *Schindler's List* and a few scenes from the then-unreleased *Quintet* Show around the time she began her search, and she immediately felt that Fiennee could give the part what it needed.

Ralph is one of the most extraordinary actors of our time," Bigelow enthuses. "And I liked the fact that to American



WICK AND THE CLIP: Fiennee gets by with a little help from Angela Russell (top and right) and Charlotte Lewis (bottom).

THE WRITERS OF

I love action—I love how kinetic it is, I love the play of it on your psyche,” director Kathryn Bigelow says, but she adds that her films are “all attempts to invert and subvert the genre.” Putting the good guys—and bad guys—on surf boards in *Point Break* and creating one of the few credible female action heroines in *Blue Steel* are only a couple of Bigelow’s subversive accomplishments. Below, she discusses her brief but remarkable film career.

The Loveless (1981)—Bigelow’s first film is an evocative, if somewhat slow-moving story of a biker gang that rolls into a sleepy Southern town in the 1970s and leaves a path of destruction in its wake. In homage to *The Wild One*, the film quietly rages against society’s hypocrisy and brutality, a rebellious attitude personified by the lead biker, played by young, handsome Willem Dafoe. “I wrote [the script] with Monty Montgomery and directed it with him as well,” she says. “The project evolved, and suddenly we were in the South, just below Savannah, in August making this movie in 120-degree heat.” Bigelow recently viewed *The Loveless* for the first time in years, and she describes the experience with wistful fondness. “It was a learning experience, and Willem was incredible,” Bigelow says of the making of her film debut. “It was definitely an attempt to suspend the narrative and keep the spirit of icons [like the motorcycle] alive.”

Near Dark (1987)—Steven Charles Jaffe, who produced this film as well as *Strange Days*, calls *Near Dark* “the first non-Gothic vampire movie.” Rejecting the overwrought theatrics of past and present-day adaptations of the legend, Bigelow’s second feature is a polished, stylized mood piece. In the opening scenes, Caleb, a young Western rancher played by Adrian Pasdar, encounters a beautiful young

reluctantly introduces Caleb into her gypsy tribe of modern-day vampires. “That’s the only other experience I’ve had where I shot almost exclusively at night,” Bigelow says of *Near Dark*, an exhausting location shoot. She acknowledges the film shares more than after-dark filming with *Strange Days*. Both films are filled with “real strong emotion—and complicated characters who act like living, breathing human beings. They have desire and a great sense of emotional pain, and that drives them forward.”



Blue Steel (1990)—“I was interested in putting a female character in a police setting,” Bigelow says of her third film, which starred Jamie Lee Curtis as a rookie New York cop. “I really liked [here’s someone who has made a choice to work in a tough job].” Bigelow liked Curtis’ character, Megan Turner. “Yes, what I love about it is that all the elements that she faces are completely universal—they don’t break out along gender lines. It’s all about fear and survival.” *Blue Steel* is the rare action thriller that packs an emotional wallop, evoking



Bigelow’s fascination with the danger—and necessity—of emotional connection.

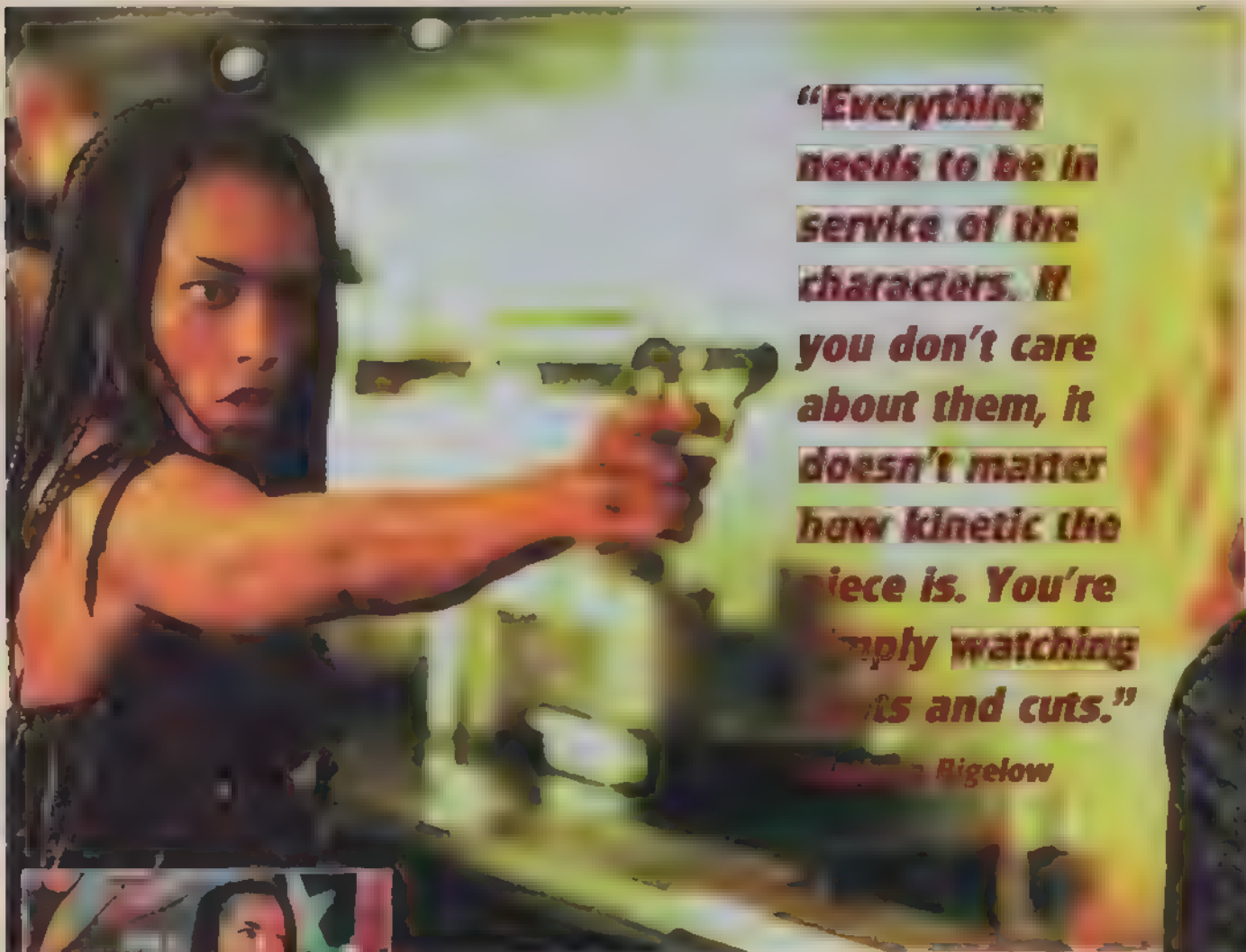
...she does, but the thing that is her undoing is her ability

slow. “I love that juxtaposition, that complexity, which is the human condition. You’ve got the

cerebral self and the emotional self—when they’re in collusion it’s great, when they’re in collision, it’s not.” Like a cop in *Strange Days*, Megan Turner has been “trained to have a sixth sense, to be able to feel things that are useless on herself.”

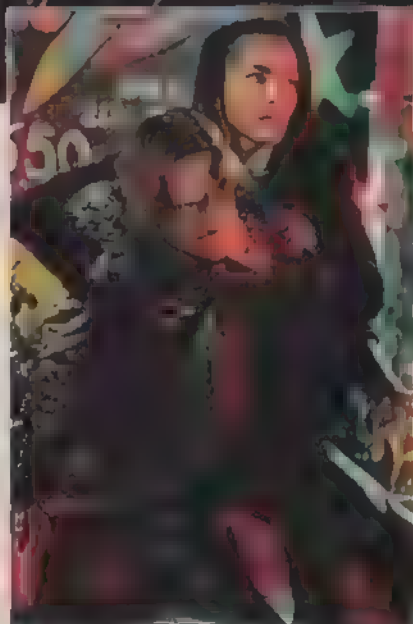
...an existential twist, *Point Break* starred a pre-*Speed* Keanu Reeves as an undercover FBI agent who infiltrates a gang of surfing bank robbers led by a philosophical adrenaline junkie named Bodhi (Patrick Swayze). When she got the

...you have this amazing [scenic] landscape that is the epitome of tranquility and peace, and then you juxtapose it with something very cruel and brutal.” So the director filled the offbeat cop drama with unexpected action set pieces, including masterfully choreographed foot chases and lyrical shots of skydiving. “It’s original and fresh—just like the setting,” Bigelow says. “From [an action movie] standpoint, I think it was a little left of center.” —V.R.



"Everything needs to be in service of the characters. If you don't care about them, it doesn't matter how kinetic the piece is. You're simply watching stunts and cuts."

—John Dahl



black activist, Bassett plays Lenny's best friend, a limo driver named Lornette Mason (nicknamed Mace). "I could never conceive of anyone else playing this part," says Bigelow. "Angela was the first and only choice. She's the moral center of the piece, and in that sense, there's a strength in her that is both quiet and profound. She really is an anchor for Lenny, a safe haven."

The backstory of Lenny and Mace's relationship, like the entire film, is rather complex for an action-adventure movie. Their friendship began under unusual—and traumatic—circumstances: Lenny was part of a police team that arrested Mace's husband for dealing drugs. "She came home and saw the arrest taking place, and she rushed into the house and found Lenny reading a story to her little boy," says Jaffe. "So she has developed a very maternal affection for this person, who, in the midst of this chaos that could destroy the child's life, put a protective arm around her young son."

Then there's Lenny's former girlfriend, Faith Justin, played by Lewis (*Natural Born*

Killers, California). "Lenny's someone from her past, who she's secretly still fond of, but she's not in love with him the way he is with her—he's still obsessed with her," says Jaffe. Despite her misgivings about her former flame, Faith—an up-and-coming rock singer—decides to help Lenny by "getting involved in the search for the killer."

Casting the role of Faith, Bigelow says was a particularly tough job. "Whenever you're trying to cast someone who has to do something like singing, you're torn between casting a singer who you can work with as an actor, and casting an actor who can lip-sync and then finding a voice match to do the vocal work," the director says. "But the absolute good fortune of having cast Juliette is that she can do it all. Her voice is exquisite and her performance is amazing, so it's the best of both worlds."

"*Strange Days* is, oddly enough, a really

ONE FIENNES DAY: *Strange Days* will make Ralph Fiennes "the British Elvis," according to FX supervisor James Lima.

audiences, he had never played a character like this. There's something very genuine and new about him in this part.

The film's acting burden does not fall disproportionately on Fiennes, however. Angela Bassett and Juliette Lewis round out the leading roles as women who, for very different reasons, each exert a strong influence on Lenny's turbulent life.

Best known for her role as Malcolm X's wife in Spike Lee's film about the slain



strong character piece more than anything, which I think is the glue that makes it a great thriller/murder mystery," Jaffe says. "That's the problem with a lot of movies today—character development is minimal, and the plot is mostly everything. But if you don't care about the characters, you have a really tough time caring about the action they're thrown into. [So] we cast *Strange Days* extremely carefully, we got great actors, and it was an excellent script."

For much of the last decade, *Strange Days* existed only as a story treatment by Cameron, who is Bigelow's ex-husband as well as one of the film's producers. After the script was completed three years ago, preproduction began, and actual shooting, which took place mostly at night on the streets of Los Angeles, started last fall.

I really like practical locations, because there's a certain graphic realism that you can't get [on soundstages]," Bigelow says. "And I think shooting on location gives the actors a sense of place and context that is crucial. But it's hard on everybody, especially the crew and the camera department, because you're working with a tremendous amount of restrictions." It's also expensive, but her producer says he doesn't mind that they've "become known as the night people of Hollywood."

"Night shooting takes longer, and it's more difficult to film," admits

Jaffe. "But there's a mystery to it that you automatically get by being out at night. If it's well lit, you can't compare it to daylight."

Jaffe faced perhaps one of the biggest production challenges in recent film history when he was called upon to stage the enormous New Year's Eve party in which the movie's concluding sequence takes place. "There was a line in the script that said, 'The mother of all parties,' and knowing Jim [Cameron's] work, I knew what that had to be," Jaffe says. Considering that *Strange Days* didn't have a *True Lies*-sized budget, Jaffe notes with a laugh that "desperation sometimes proves to be very creative."

The filmmakers finally decided to stage a huge outdoor party in downtown L.A., a gargantuan

logistical undertaking, to say the least. "It seemed to be the most insane solution," Bigelow laughs. But there really wasn't any alternative, she adds, short of "digitally painting in 400,000 people."

Though there were reports of a few mild drug overdoses, the raucous outdoor party—during which five tons of confetti were dropped on the revelers—was a rousing cinematic and social success. "We put together a rave and we also hooked up with a dating service that advertised something to the effect of 'Meet the date of your dreams on New Year's Eve 1999 and be a part of this movie,'" Jaffe reports. "So we had 10,000 people show up paying \$10 a head, and then 7,000 people crashed the gate, so we ended up with 17,000 people and we actually made money" on the festivities, which featured performances by dance groups like Deee-Lite and the Aphex Twin. Bigelow says she constantly runs into people who say they have fond memories of partying on the set of her movie. "Everybody seemed to have a really good time—I think it was a great experience for everyone," she says. "It was planned out like a military maneuver, and it went as planned—which was a shock."

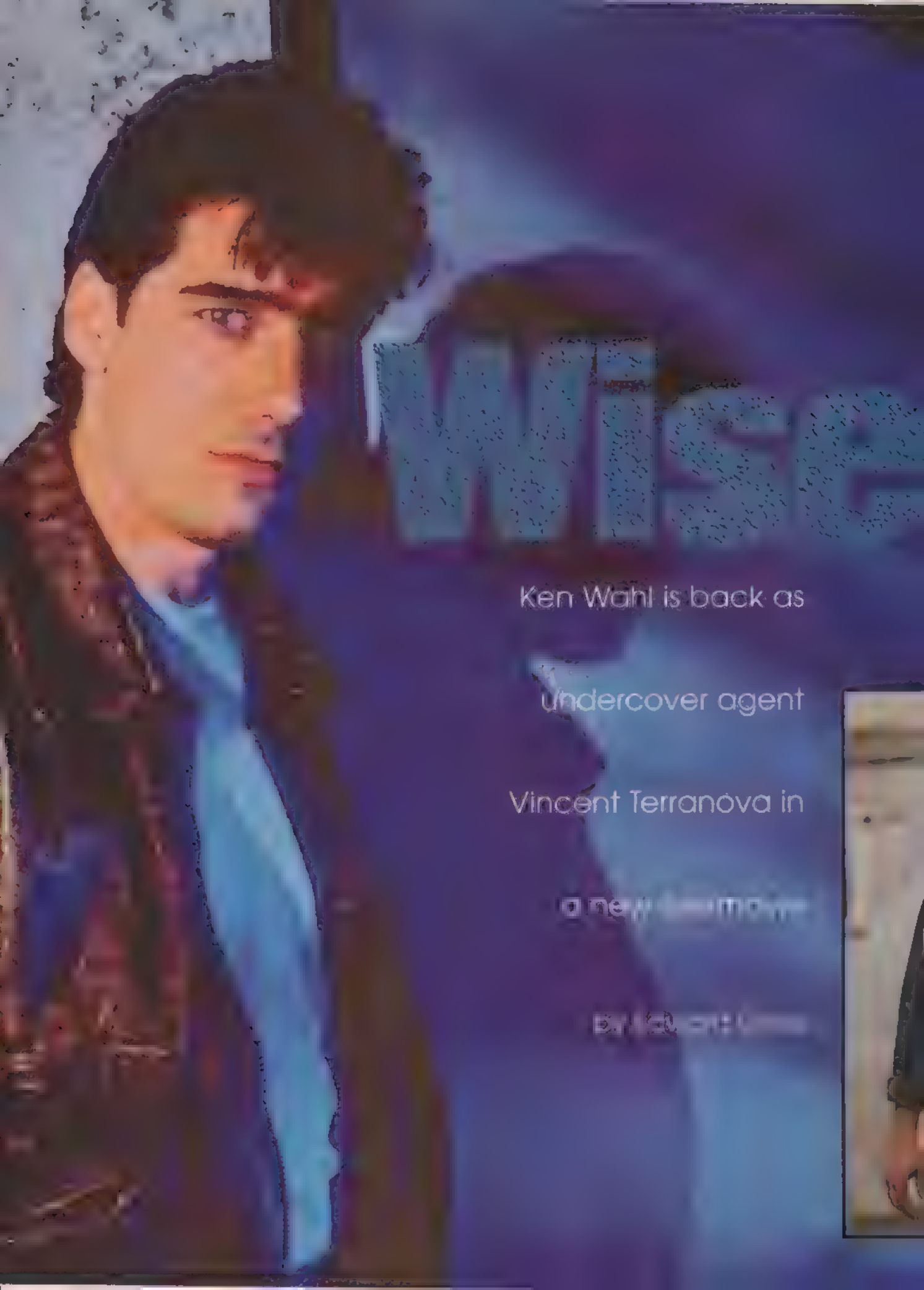
Corralling 17,000 revelers for her denouement may have been her most outrageous accomplishment, but she says it was more challenging to successfully depict nuanced, realistic characters that transcend the confines of a genre film. "I think character is what's important," emphasizes Bigelow, a former painter. "Everything needs to be in service of that. Because if you don't understand or care about them, it doesn't matter how kinetic the piece is. You're simply watching shots and cuts. Nothing emotional transpires. I think the beauty of film is that it has the ability to be cathartic.... I think that's probably why I gravitated from painting to film—it has the ability to work on that level and not be too precious about it."

And she feels the warning that *Strange Days* sends about our increasing reliance on virtual, rather than real, experiences, is especially timely as America succumbs to the information revolution. Lenny's technology "provides genuine experiences for what we are becoming, which is a culture of shut-ins," Bigelow observes. "It's really just a gentle step between where we are now and where the film takes us. It's an extrapolation of the need we have for shared experience." Like the on-line world that has captured the allegiance of thousands of people in recent years, the attraction of Lenny's wares is that they can be used in a safe, if ultimately isolated and unreal, environment. But what saves Lenny in the end is not his virtual technology or his superior weaponry, but his humanity. "His ability to feel," says Bigelow, "is the cause of his personal redemption." ♦



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WITNESS

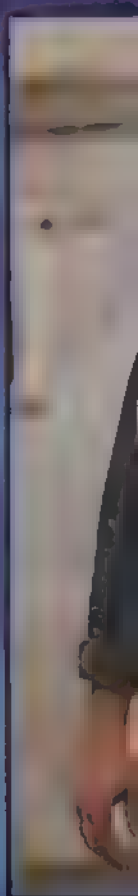
Ken Wahl is back as

undercover agent

Vincent Terranova in

a new thriller

WITNESS



Innovative. Intelligent. Unpredictable. Those were the words commonly used by critics to describe the 1987-91 television series

Wiseguy—and the praise has belatedly reached the industry's executive suites. The show, which originally aired on CBS, is returning in a two-hour ABC television movie early next year, which may lead to still further adventures for Organized Crime Bureau agent Vincent Terranova.

In the series, Ken Wahl portrays undercover agent Terranova, who spent 18 months in prison to help create his cover as a "wiseguy." Upon release, he begins a series of investigations that range from the mob and white supremacists to international arms dealers and ruthless music industry power brokers.

occasions, these really were guys you'd expect to meet in dark alleys and the back rooms of mob-run restaurants. Spicing up the drama was the shifting, unclear dividing line between good and evil, and the moments that made the audience wonder which side of the fence Vinnie would ultimately land on.

That's the whole point to the series: to show that everybody's not all good, not all bad," Wahl has said. "These things intertwine and therein lies the conflict. It wasn't just Gene Autry riding into town with his white hat on. I must say that that's one of my favorite things about this character. He's an undercover agent, so he's acting. When you're an actor doing a part, you're not living in constant fear—well, I guess some actors are—but when this character is

WISGUY REDUX

The biggest difference between *Wiseguy* and nearly every other cop show of the time was the realism of its characters and situations—and the tense, visceral quality of the show. Whether you're talking about Terranova, his field director Frank McPike (Jonathan Banks) or Lifeguard (Jim Byrnes), the behind-the-scenes operator who saved Vinnie on more than a couple of

acting, there's a lot of underlying fear because he has to make sure he's saying the right thing all the time.

Unlike most episodic villains, the *Wiseguy* antagonists weren't dispatched after one or two episodes. Sometimes it took up to nine installments of a saga—or arc, as it was referred to by the show's creative team—for a tale to be resolved. "I knew as a writer that it would create a situation where Vinnie would be a counter puncher as opposed to carrying the action in a story," co-creator Stephen J. Cannell told *Rolling Stone*. "My idea was that we would reinvent the show every six months."

Joel Surnow, currently supervising producer of UPN's *Nowhere Man* and scripter of the new *Wiseguy*, had been offered the job of producer of the original series. "I think the reason they came to me," he muses, "is because I had come off of the first year of *Miami Vice* and the first year of *The Equalizer* and in a way those shows were kind of like a prelude to *Wiseguy*. They were the edgy cop shows that took a single male lead or double male lead format and made it more realistic than *Starsky & Hutch*."

Surnow recognizes that the series' unique process of evolving stories over several episodes provided much of the show's power. So the greatest challenge he faced was finding a way to maintain that slowly unfolding tension within a single two-hour format.

"To do it," he explains, "you have to cut some things and hang it really on one kind of an emotional idea



ON THE ROAD: Ken Wahl and the late Ray Sharkey trust their stuff in the original CBS TV series

In this case, it's a relationship with a woman. There's all kinds of great stuff from the original show that's worked into the framework of the two hours. Vinnie does what he's always done, only it's 10 years later and he's still doing it. This story is basically designed to recapture the spirit of the series. Actually, the spirit of the first year, which was wonderful. During that year, *Wiseguy* didn't really have to be about anything. It was simply about good, hard cop stuff spun out in an inventive, sometimes surreal world. The show never felt completely realistic to me. They were always pushing the envelope of what the audience would supposedly take. It went two clicks past it, and everybody loved what they did."

Wiseguy was originally launched with a script by Cannell and Frank Lupo. According to Lupo, it was difficult to decide exactly where to start. "We had one draft that started when Vinnie first entered the bureau's training academy," he says, "and we had the one where he's in the middle of the scam that puts him in prison. I would say the first half hour of the show should have been the one that got him locked up, and that was the kind of material we were testing. But in a pilot, you have to give the network an idea of what the show will be like. Had we handed in these stories, the network would've said, 'Okay, this tells us that the series is coming, but not what the series will be.' By the time we were getting closer, working on the second story I mentioned, we felt it wasn't as far developed as the two hours that would eventually air. Then we said, 'You know, we've got to keep going; we should either write a three-hour pilot or short-cut the front end.' We short-cut the front end, with the intent of always being able to do a flashback one day; a flashback which reveals how he went to [OCB training] and then to prison."

In the aired pilot, Vinnie has been released from prison and hooks up with mob kingpin Sonny Steelgrave (the late Ray Sharkey). As the federal agent digs himself deeper into the Steelgrave organization, a brotherly relationship develops between the two men. By the time the story reaches its apex, it has become obvious that doing the "right" thing could be difficult for Vinnie. In a sense, betraying Sonny would be like betraying himself.

"We wanted to come up with a character that Vinnie could truly admire on the other side of the fence," Lupo says. "And as the whole Sonny Steelgrave story started, it was almost like a miniseries rather than a television pilot. We knew we were going to build up the relationship between Vinnie and Sonny so that by the time we hit the end, it wouldn't be a situation where Sonny

is arrested and Vinnie, with a tear in his eye, says, 'We got you, asshole!' Needless to say, this kind of thing raised a few eyebrows at CBS, and they said to us 'Couldn't Vinnie really be faking Sonny Steelgrave out? He doesn't have to *truth* admire him.' We said, 'You don't understand where we're coming from,' and their response was, 'It's going to be really clear that Vinnie's not going over, right?' We said, 'We're not sure. We will redeem him, but it has got to be enticing.' So it was that kind of reaction, but there wasn't a tremendous amount of resistance.

"I love the characters," adds producer David Burke, who guided the series. "I thought the relationship between Vinnie and Sonny was one Vinnie would like to maintain as a friendship, but he can't because he knows the true stripes of the man. That was enticing. I'm not a big fan of gunplay, and *Wiseguy* presented the opportunity to actually spend time with characters and develop them fully. I think one of our greatest strengths was that we were able to give actors material they could really sink their teeth into. That, for me, was the essential strength of what we did, and we were real fortunate with performers; people who weren't afraid to play big moments and to play dialogue that is not traditional television.

Among the actors drawn to the series were Kevin Spacey, Joan Severance, Fred Dalton Thompson (now a U.S. senator from Tennessee), Jerry Lewis, Ron Silver, Tim Curry and Paul Winfield. With such talent, along with first-rate writing, *Wiseguy* gained enormous cult status—but the ratings lingered in the lower half of the Nielsen lists, and the show struggled through three seasons. Then Wahl and Cannell had a falling out regarding the future direction of the show, resulting in the star departing. *Something* was obviously wrong, because when *Wiseguy* returned for its fourth season, Steven Bauer had been cast in the new lead role of Michael Santana, and the entire original writing staff had departed. On camera, Vinnie was believed dead, victim of an international drug

cartel. With little fanfare, the series disappeared a handful of episodes later.

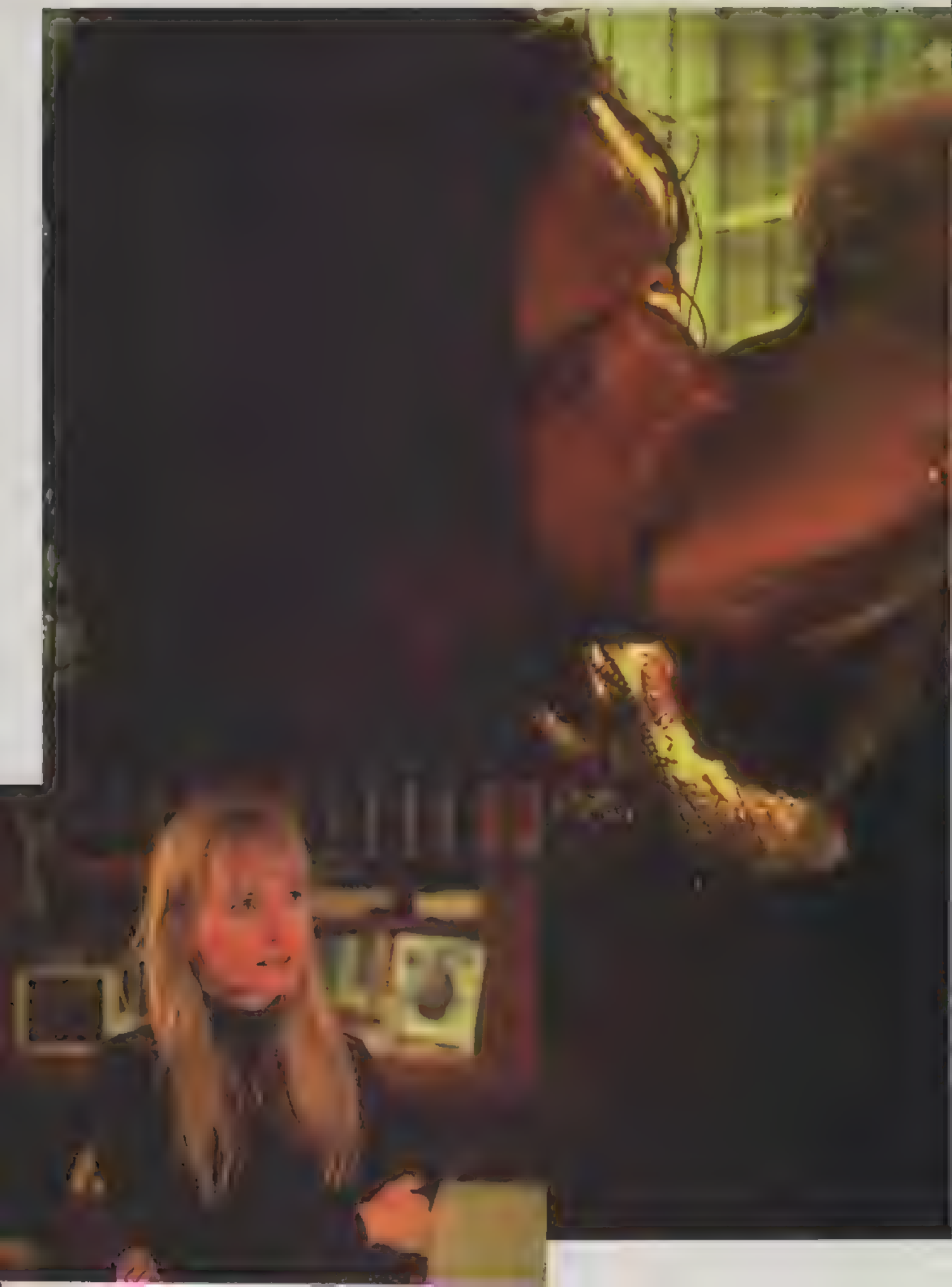
"His death was left ambiguous on the show," says Surnow, "but we're not going to be dealing with it at all. As far as we're concerned, it's just 10 years later for the characters. I love the show and, not to toot my own horn, this script is like the *real* show. It's like a first-year *Wiseguy* with the appropriate updating. The characters don't communicate with codes the way they used to. Also, the OCB isn't the same. The Young Turks have taken over the agency and have sort of made Vinnie one of the dinosaurs from the old era."

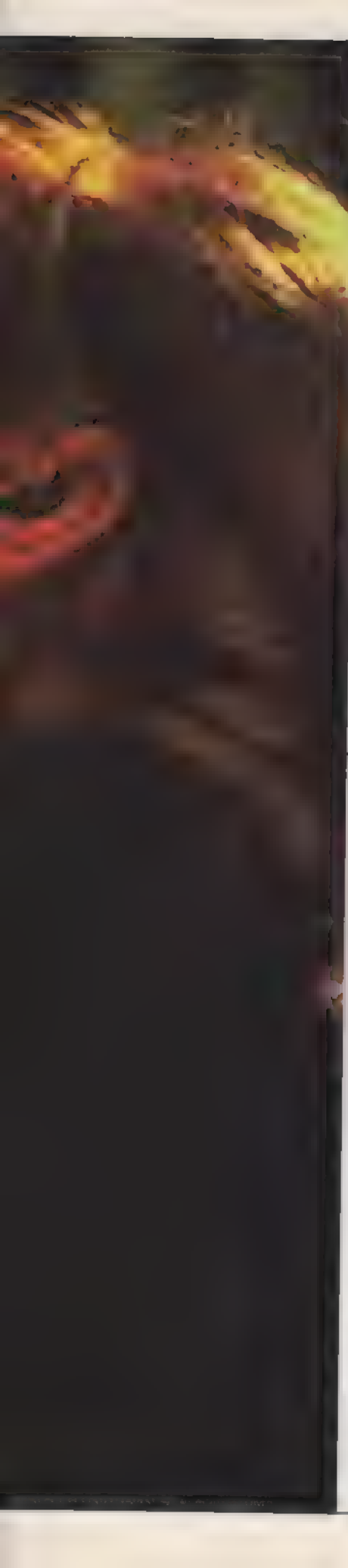
In what Surnow is hoping will be just the first of numerous *Wiseguy* telefilms, Vinnie goes undercover in Silicon Valley. "What I tried to do was figure out where you can make more money than the drug trade," says Surnow. "Silicon Valley is the answer, especially the illegal use of the Internet through the World Wide Web. There's a tremendous opportunity there for ill-gotten gains, and it's the perfect assignment for Vinnie Terranova."

"As to the rest," he smiles, "you're going to have to wait and tune in like everybody else." ♦



UNDERCOVER BLUES
Vinnie (Wahl, left) is now part of the old guard at the OCB





KISS ME DEADLY

Rebecca De Mornay confronts a mysterious stalker in the thriller *Never Talk to Strangers*—and becomes a Hollywood triple threat in the process

By Dean Lamas

I would like very much to play a ballerina," Rebecca De Mornay told *American Film* magazine 10 years ago, not long after her big feature break as Lana, the hooker who hooked Tom Cruise's heart in *Risky Business*. "They give up romance they give up food, they have no time for anything except for hours and hours of grinding work, for a few minutes of painful glory. I mean, something about that attracts me

In the interim, De Mornay has portrayed just about everything but a ballerina—including a tombovish train mechanic (*Runaway Tram*), a vulnerable fireman's wife (*Backdraft*), a nanny who behaves like the Bad Seed grown up (*The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*) and a lissome Lady

DeWinter (Disney's 1993 remake of *The Three Musketeers*). But that hasn't stopped her from adopting a danseuse's rigorous work ethic. Perhaps mindful of the vagaries of the youth-obsessed film industry, the blonde-haired, blue-eyed actress—who, at 32, isn't yet over the Hollywood hill (which seems to peak for women just short of 40)—is stretching her talents beyond the limits of the screen. Earlier this year she stepped behind the camera to direct an episode of Showtime's *The Outer Limits* ("The Conversion"). Now she's taken the role of executive producer on *Never Talk to Strangers*, a \$14 million thriller due out from TriStar this month.

Is De Mornay concerned about the dearth of worthwhile female roles—and the way women are often mistreated in the

ones that do exist? Sure, but that's not, in her view, the most pressing question: "The one that's most urgent is, 'How are women being treated across the world?' And women are treated as inferior in every country, like in Yugoslavia. So to look at how Hollywood treats women, why should that be any oasis of honoring the female when the whole world is in some sort of cosmic fit of epilepsy? My personal feeling is that it has to do with the imbalance of the male and female principles—which live in all of us.... I would like to use my influence to help illuminate this little corner."

Speaking of little corners, there's a lot of them in *Never Talk to Strangers*—and most of them are shadowy. De Mornay plays Dr. Sarah Taylor, a criminal psychologist who flings herself into an affair with a stranger named Tom Ramirez. Antonio Banderas

Shakespeare Company, here making his first stateside foray into commercial filmmaking. "If you don't dare to meet strangers, you never broaden your experience. But if you do, you run the most enormous risk. Rebecca plays a professional woman who is extremely confident as a psychologist. But she's a very lonely woman in a huge city on the private level."

Shot entirely in Toronto over 42 days last winter, the film is set in a fictional, unspecified, moderate-sized North American city just before Christmas. But in addition to "a strong sense of atmosphere," Hall strove to give the story an internal logic that was absent from such lousy recent thrillers as *Body of Evidence* and *Color of Night*. He says he did "a great deal" of work on the script, which is credited to Jordan Rush and Lewis Green, with

transcends the genre."

De Mornay, who helped secure Hall's services for *Never Talk to Strangers* and also was instrumental in the hiring of director Sidney Lumet for her 1993 courtroom drama *Guilty as Sin*, has similar high praise for the earthy Englishman. "Peter sort of rejoices in his actors' impulses, and says, 'Great, okay, is that what you're going to do?' Then he sort of joins in the ride and says, 'How about if we take it further?' There's a quality of fearlessness about him that's refreshing."

Hall had seen De Mornay elevate other genre efforts, notably *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, and some of her equally powerful television work. "I got to know her quite well before [the cameras rolled], because she was an essential part of the package from the very beginning. She had a great deal of input in the scripting and the whole conception of the movie. It was very good to have a leading actress who was also part of the production, because it reduced the 'us vs. them' side of things."

That allowed Hall and his talented troupe to concentrate on nailing the story, particularly the suspenseful denouement—which he promises will be a shocker. "It involved an enormous emotional range for Rebecca to play," he says, describing the actress' overall screen persona as "very ambiguous, very cool, very dangerous, very sexy. I think her whole ability is to investigate the unsympathetic and the dangerous—and come out the other side with the audience still accepting her. She takes great risks, and I admire that."

Hall was just as impressed by De Mornay's effectiveness behind the scenes, especially her ability to see beyond the usual tangle of production details. "She preserved the integrity of the project and certainly helped me a lot,"

he says. "Her role [as executive producer] was, more than anything, caring and making sure that panic didn't make people take shortcuts."

De Mornay attributes her professional savvy and generally calm demeanor to experience. "I had a good education in Hollywood ups and downs," she has said. "I was in a big hit [*Risky Business*] and then several lows. But it all helped me in my quest to detach. I realized there is going to be a rhythm to your career and if you take it too seriously you're going to be wrecked."

"I've been around for years in this town and I'm not crazy, I'm not dead, I haven't been in rehab. But they haven't been able to get rid of me, and that's saving a lot." ♦



DATING TIPS
De Mornay and Banderas get to know one another

while working on the insanity defense of a serial killer (Harry Dean Stanton). As she lets her cool, professional men give way to feelings of true love for Ramirez, she becomes the target of a stalker: First there are dead flowers on the doorstep, then threatening messages on her answering machine and, finally, the savage slaying of her cat. She begins to mistrust everyone she knows. Is it Toni? The devious serial killer? Her possessive next-door neighbor (Dennis Miller)? Or even her own estranged father (Len Cariou)?

"The film is about trust," says Sir Peter Hall, 64, the celebrated Broadway director (*The Merchant of Venice*) and international renowned creator of *The Royal*

additional retooling by Hall's wife, Nicki Frei, and James Dearden (*Fatal Attraction*).

"I thought it was a wonderfully original idea," says the director, whose disdain for Hollywood's labyrinthine feature development process heretofore has made him leery of film offers. "But I didn't really believe what the characters said to each other, and you have to be as honest to the audience as you can be. They may forgive you one trick if it's credible. But if you don't treat them with respect they don't accept anything. We tried to make it completely accurate psychologically and medically and to make absolutely credible human beings in terms of the acting.... I think what Rebecca and Antonio do here



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In UPN's *Nowhere Man*, a politically charged photo disappears—and the man who snapped it gets framed by a conspiracy that makes him a ...

STRANGER

in an
Estranged
Land





By Frieda Noone

Some might argue whether or not a picture is worth a thousand words. But in the case of Touchstone Television's *Nowhere Man*—debuting this fall on UPN—it's worth at least a 15 episode order. The premise of the new, hour-long mystery series pivots on some potentially incendiary truths exposed on a piece of film—specifically, a photo taken by documentary photographer Thomas Veil (Bruce Greenwood) that depicts an execution in a Third World country. Shortly after the shot disappears, Veil's life virtually vanishes as well. It seems as though some clandestine and powerful entity has everyone he knows cooperating in a master plan to wipe out every trace of his life. His wife acts as if he's a stranger, and another man is posing as her husband. His keys no longer fit the locks on his home and his photo gallery.

Veil's only option is to begin a dangerous quest to uncover the reason for this torturous conspiracy. But the once-stable man begins to question his sanity, and—appearing deluded and paranoid—he is forced into a psychiatric hospital. After learning that even the doctors are in on the scheme to erase his identity, he escapes and sets out on a cross-country course—searching for answers while eluding his unknown enemy.

Like his character, Bruce Greenwood himself can't quite fathom Veil's situation, which, thriller fans will note, is cut from the same paranoia-inducing cloth that enmeshed Sandra Bullock in last summer's *The Net*. "I suppose, like the audience supposes, that it has something to do with the photograph he took—or maybe something he saw just beyond the frame," says the affable actor, best known for playing the manipulative Dr. Seth Gritlin on the medical drama *St. Elsewhere*. "But I don't know exactly what it is he's done. It makes Veil a really interesting role because I honestly don't know why the hell they're doing this to him. It plays into the trust issues that we all have: Who can you trust? Can you

reach out to somebody when you're in desperate need of human contact? If your trust and your belief in humankind have been abused by somebody mercilessly, it's hard to reach out because you can't set yourself up to be abused again.

"Anyway," Greenwood adds, chuckling, "it plays into the issues of trust that I—having lived in L.A. for 10 years—have a lot of!"

With Veil's predicament established, *Nowhere Man* will avoid turning into an ever-intensifying, *Twin Peaks*-type whodunit and stick to open-and-shut episodes. "We're not going to be trying to get you deeper and deeper into the mystery of what has happened to this man every week," says executive producer Lawrence Hertzog (*Stingray*, several *Hart to Hart* telemovies), who penned the pilot. "Your

end of the episode."

Hertzog emphasizes that *Nowhere Man* is "more than an exciting hour of detective action"—it's also a show with thematic substance. Veil is less an Everyman than a person who overcomes blind conformity to see the truth. "He's been singled out for reasons of honor, integrity and a point of view that is considered a threat, for something that he knows or has seen. In the broadest view, this is about the system and how it demands that we fit in—that we be round pegs that fit into round holes. Tom is currently I suppose to the people responsible for his situation, a square peg. And they have their wooden mallet, hammering away at him with a lot of energy. So it becomes about how much he can resist." Though the series focuses on Veil, it will become ev-



RUNNING SCARED: Bruce Greenwood (here and opposite page, standing) stars in *Nowhere Man*

head would be so full of clues that you'd run the risk that *Twin Peaks* ran: People would say, "This is just becoming tricks. We can't keep track of it."

To avoid that trap, explains Hertzog, all of Veil's relationships—at least as he knows them—will be terminated by the first show's conclusion. (In fact, the only elements besides Veil that survive the pilot intact are his missing photo, titled "Hidden Agenda," and its negative—the sole evidence of his former existence.) "He has no friends after the pilot; it's not a process of attrition. He alone must work out this crisis. That's not to say that he won't meet friendly people en route. But, this being episodic television, I'm not sure that the people who are friendly to him are going to be healthy at the

end of its course that there are other "nowhere people."

A tremendous fan of *The Twilight Zone*, Hertzog mentions as inspirations that TV series and another—the late-'60s mystery-adventure *The Prisoner*, which concerned a government agent who resists brainwashing after being detained in a surreal community by his enigmatic abductors. Yet in spite of the bizarre plot turn that sets Veil's saga in motion, the executive producer wants to keep things grounded. "There are certain surreal qualities to the pilot, and there will be surreal episodes. But hopefully there will be a feeling that this just possibly could happen. I would like to keep that alive, even if the show starts to get pretty close to the incredible. We'll fall into a hole if

"It plays into the issues of trust that we all have: Can you reach out to somebody when you're in desperate need of human contact?"

—actor Bruce Greenwood

you suddenly stop identifying with Tom and start thinking, 'This is so weird I don't believe it anymore.'

Greenwood agrees that keeping closer to the mundane can give the series a stronger scarier edge. "Take, for instance, meeting somebody on a street in a small town in which you've never been, somebody who you knew when you were a kid. In the context of Tom's experience that becomes absolutely terrifying. For anybody else it would be, 'Oh, how are you? Where have you been?' But in Veil's mind, the questions are closer to, 'How did they get here? Why are they here? How are they going to undo me?' Even the most seemingly innocuous incidents can have sinister implications."

The pilot's helmer, Tobe Hooper—a veteran genre director known for his intense visual style (*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Poltergeist*)—also favors a low-key approach to the material. "Relative to the times that *The Prisoner* was produced, today—by those standards—we live in the surreal," he notes. "What I tried to create in the first episode was a surreal world, but yet one that wouldn't separate the audience from the dramatic piece. In other words, something that wouldn't wave flags and say, 'Look at me! Look at my filmmaking ability!'—but concentrate on these characters."

Hooper is heartened by what he sees as a trend toward feature film-level quality in TV, thanks to programs like *The X-Files* and *N.Y.P.D. Blue*. "Television offers certain freedoms now that feature directors are attracted to. And those include that we can be involved with material that has a bit more substance. We don't have to do as much flash and explosion."

That *Nowhere Man* won't be attempting to push the mayhem envelope is probably just as well, considering the current political climate. While acknowledging that there's generally more leeway in network television's Standards and Practices divisions today, Hooper, who directed the rather shockingly violent (for its time) 1979 miniseries *Salem's Lot*, doubts the series will be subject to the kind of censorial strife *American Gothic* has encountered at CBS (see page 13). "The networks and production studios have certainly become more responsible about these things," he says. "*Nowhere Man* is a thriller, and we're handling [that issue] quite well."

Hertzog, meanwhile, lauds fledgling UPN for taking a chance on such an unusual project. "I don't think any other network would have given me *carte blanche* to do this," he says, recalling with astonishment his initial pitch meeting. "They looked at me and said, 'If you could do anything you absolutely ever wanted to do, but you never had the courage to pitch it because you felt you'd be tossed from the office, what would you do?' My initial reaction was one of shock, because after more than 15 years in



this business I didn't have an answer

"I called a few other friends of mine who are writers and said, 'You're not going to believe it—I've just had the meeting we have all dreamed about. Somebody really cares enough to let us take a chance. I guess I felt a little bit like Tom Veil in that situation: I didn't really believe it!'"

But there was a somewhat intimidating side to it as well, Hertzog admits. "After my initial enthusiasm over getting my big shot, I realized I would have to put my money where my mouth was. I thought, Boy, I'm going to have to crawl back home and do *Hart to Hart* again for another few years if this doesn't work."

Although the 90-minute pilot was completed quickly in Los Angeles (it had to be prepped and shot in just 18 days), Hertzog and company chose to base the balance of the production in Portland, Ore., "to give the show a look that could be anywhere... a feel that we are in places we've been, places

we've seen. Los Angeles has such a defined and specific look with the palm trees, etc., while Portland enables us to get to mountains, suburbs and small, nowhere towns [for use as backdrops] quickly. All we have to do is turn around to get a different look, which is helpful in conveying some of the distances Veil travels on a per-episode basis." (The Pacific Northwest also is familiar territory to the Canadian-born Greenwood, who attended the University of British Columbia after being raised in Washington, D.C., Princeton, N.J. and Vancouver.)

Even if the show turns out less than perfect, Hertzog feels that being granted the opportunity to do it bodes well for TV at large. "I believe UPN is sincere in trying this show," he says. "If it works, it will have proven a point: that we'll get better television, or at least more interesting television, if someone at the network level gives the creative community a chance to work like that." ♦

Slashing Pumpkins

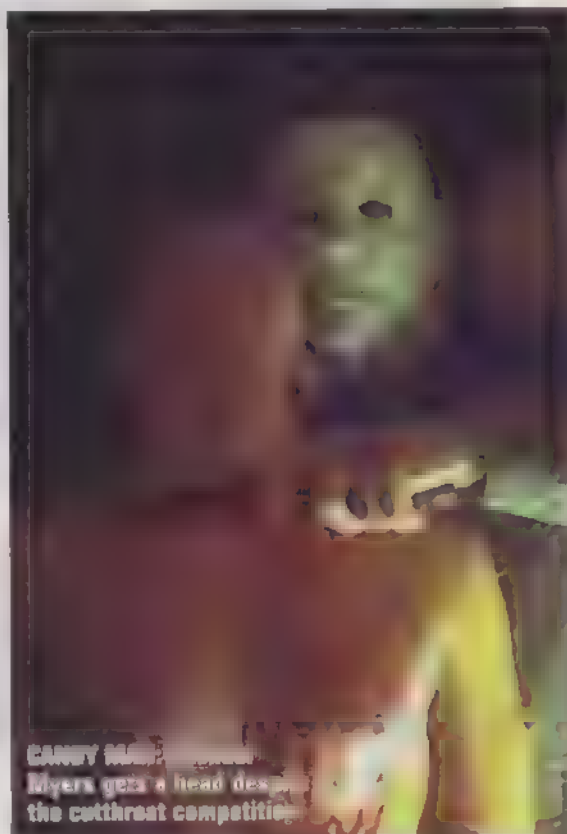
The 26-year-old scribe behind *Halloween VI* tries to recarve a hackneyed horror premise

Evil never dies, and neither does Hollywood's lust for big box office. Since John Carpenter's now-classic 1978 original, the *Halloween* films have returned more than \$200 million on an investment of less than one-tenth that amount—making it one of the industry's most profitable franchises. Now the series' bogeyman continues his rampage in Miramax's *Halloween VI: The Curse of Michael Myers*, which opens Oct. 13.

Though an endless nightmare for the sleepy fictional town of Haddonfield, Ill., Myers is a dream-weaver for screenwriter Daniel Farrands, who mapped the murderer's latest trick-or-treat route. The 26-year-old horror fan has been a die-hard follower of *Halloween* and its ilk since watching the first film on network television at age 12. Despite the ever-more outlandish and gory methods of dispatch with which the horror genre began to mock itself, Farrands never lost faith in the character that spawned the cycle. In 1987, the then-agentless college dropout began phoning *Halloween* producer Moustapha Akkad. "I kept begging him to give me a shot at resurrecting Michael Myers. Akkad had several writers on it, but the ideas never got much beyond killing teens with fondue sticks."

In June of 1994, Akkad finally gave Farrands his shot, and the nascent scripter hit the bull's-eye—though not with the usual silk array of pointy implements. "I've always felt that Michael was scarier using his butcher knife—and his hands," he says. In addition to bringing the premise back to brutal basics—Myers' mission is to stab all of his blood relatives, including the niece he has terrorized for the past two sequels—Farrands says he has tied up loose ends and "fleshed out" the legend of the man behind the mask (which was initially a doctored-up Captain Kirk costume mask).

An integral part of the legend is Myers' ex shrink, Dr. Loomis—reprised here for the final



CANDY FARRANDS
Myers gets a head design
the cutthroat competition

time by Donald Pleasence, who died last March. Farrands was "honored" to write dialogue for the actor. "It was incredible when he said to me, 'This is the best *Halloween* screen play I've read since the first.' I knew I'd done my job then."

Farrands, who has an adaptation of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* in development, isn't worried about being labeled a hack—after all, the horror genre has been a breeding ground for top writers-turned-directors like John Sayles and Frank Darabont. Besides, he feels that Myers is more than a cardboard killer. "He's scary because someone like this could exist and stalk your own town. That sets him apart."

And what if Michael Myers, Freddy Krueger and *Friday the 13th*'s Jason were thrown into a cage together? "Michael assures Farrands, 'I would kick their asses.'"

Dean Lamanna

ALIEN 4

THE PLAYERS: T.B.D.

THE PLOT: Now that Ripley (Josh Warden) is dead, how longer will *Alien* fans have their favorite franchise on the screen? We wish we knew.

THE DIRECTOR: T.B.D.

DISTRIBUTOR: 20th Century Fox

RELEASE DATE: T.B.D.

BARB WIRE

THE PLAYERS: Pamela Anderson

THE PLOT: Baywatch's Anderson stars as a former cop turned nun of the bad, locking comic-book heroine.

THE DIRECTOR: David Hogan

DISTRIBUTOR: Gramercy

RELEASE DATE: T.B.D.

BROKEN ARROW

THE PLAYERS: John Travolta, Christian Slater, Samantha Mathis

THE PLOT: Slater and Travolta

in battle as Stealth bomber pilots who fan the flames of war.

DISTRIBUTOR: 20th Century Fox

RELEASE DATE: December 2

THE CHAMBER

THE PLAYERS: T.B.D.

THE PLOT: Ron Howard dropped out of the project based on the novel by John Grisham, when Brad Pitt couldn't be lured into the starring role, but now Bobby O'Donnell is thin close to signing on as the

THE DIRECTOR: James Foley

DISTRIBUTOR: Miramax

RELEASE DATE: T.B.D.

THE COLONY

THE PLAYERS: Jean-Claude Van Damme

THE PLOT: Batman producer Peter Guber bought this actioner specifically for Van Damme, as a CIA agent who must

THE DIRECTOR: T.B.D.

DISTRIBUTOR: T.B.D.

RELEASE DATE: T.B.D.

CUTTHROAT ISLAND

THE PLAYERS: Ceena Dine

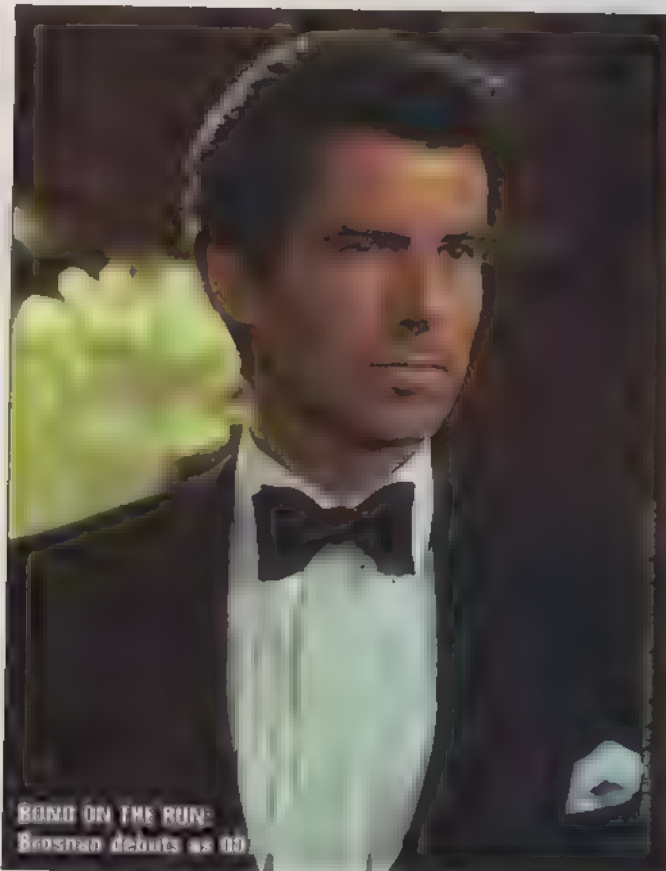
Matthew Modine

THE PLOT: The indie pic should finally make its way to the local multiplex this Christmas season.

THE DIRECTOR: Reun Hahn

DISTRIBUTOR: MCA

RELEASE DATE: December 15



BOND ON THE RUN:
Brosnan debuts as 00

DAYLIGHT

THE PLAYERS: Kevin Costner, Bruce Campbell, Jeff Bridges
THE PLOT: A man who has been in a coma for 17 years wakes up and finds himself in a car with a stranger. He must escape the car and find his way out of the forest.
THE DIRECTOR: Rob Marshall
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: Nov. 11, 1993

DEAD DROP

THE PLAYERS: Kevin Costner, Bruce Campbell, Jeff Bridges
THE PLOT: A man who has been in a coma for 17 years wakes up and finds himself in a car with a stranger. He must escape the car and find his way out of the forest.
THE DIRECTOR: Rob Marshall
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: 1993

DRAGONHEART

THE PLAYERS: Dennis Quaid, Scott Glenn, Christopher Reeve
THE PLOT: A man who has been in a coma for 17 years wakes up and finds himself in a car with a stranger. He must escape the car and find his way out of the forest.
THE DIRECTOR: Rob Marshall
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: Nov. 11, 1993

THE ERASER

THE PLAYERS: Arnold Schwarzenegger
THE PLOT: A man who has been in a coma for 17 years wakes up and finds himself in a car with a stranger. He must escape the car and find his way out of the forest.
THE DIRECTOR: Rob Marshall
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: Nov. 11, 1993

ESCAPE FROM L.A.

THE PLAYERS: Kevin Costner, Bruce Campbell, Jeff Bridges
THE PLOT: A man who has been in a coma for 17 years wakes up and finds himself in a car with a stranger. He must escape the car and find his way out of the forest.
THE DIRECTOR: Rob Marshall
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: Nov. 11, 1993

EXECUTIVE DECISION

THE PLAYERS: Kevin Costner, Bruce Campbell, Jeff Bridges
THE PLOT: A man who has been in a coma for 17 years wakes up and finds himself in a car with a stranger. He must escape the car and find his way out of the forest.
THE DIRECTOR: Rob Marshall
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: Nov. 11, 1993

THE CINESCAPEE

PETER FONDA

HI



Easy Riders:
Fonda hits the road with Hopper

FROM DUSK TILL DAWN

THE PLAYERS: George Clooney, Seth Green, Lewis Harvey Keitel
THE PLOT: Two thieves enter a biker bar where the undead, the script
THE DIRECTOR: Robert Rodriguez
DISTRIBUTOR: Miramax
RELEASE DATE: December 11

GOLDENEYE

THE PLAYERS: Pierce Brosnan, Sean Bean, Joe Don Baker, Ian Coltrane, Izabella Scorupco
THE PLOT: In this make-or-buy-it-Born-again-007 go
THE DIRECTOR: Martin Campbell
DISTRIBUTOR: MGM/UA
RELEASE DATE: November 17

HEAT

THE PLAYERS: Val Kilmer, Robert De Niro, Al Pacino
THE PLOT: Kilmer loses his cool in De Niro's crime
THE DIRECTOR: Michael Mann
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: December 11

INDEPENDENCE DAY

THE PLAYERS: Will Smith, Jeff Goldblum, Bill Pullman
THE PLOT: A giant alien ship lands in the White House

THE DIRECTOR: Roland Emmerich
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: July 4

THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU

THE PLAYERS: Rob Morrow, Fariza Balk
THE PLOT: Brando plays the gosh scientist

THE DIRECTOR: John Dahl
DISTRIBUTOR: TriStar
RELEASE DATE: November 17

JUMANJI

THE PLAYERS: Robin Williams, Morris Chestnut, Jonathan Demme
THE PLOT: A game of chance
THE DIRECTOR: John Dahl
DISTRIBUTOR: TriStar
RELEASE DATE: November 17

MARS ATTACKS

THE PLAYERS: Tim Allen, Jeff Bridges, Michael Keaton
THE PLOT: A giant alien ship lands in the White House

THE DIRECTOR: Tim Allen
DISTRIBUTOR: TriStar
RELEASE DATE: November 17

MARY REILLY

THE PLAYERS: Julia Roberts
THE PLOT: In this retelling of the
THE DIRECTOR: Stephen Frears
DISTRIBUTOR: TriStar
RELEASE DATE: November 17

MEN IN BLACK

THE PLAYERS: Will Smith, Tommy Lee Jones
THE PLOT: A giant alien ship lands in the White House

THE DIRECTOR: Barry Sonnenfeld
DISTRIBUTOR: Columbia
RELEASE DATE: July 4

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

THE PLAYERS: Tom Cruise, Doug Liman
THE PLOT: A giant alien ship lands in the White House

THE DIRECTOR: John Dahl
DISTRIBUTOR: TriStar
RELEASE DATE: November 17

MONEY TRAIN

THE PLAYERS: Robin Williams, Morris Chestnut, Jonathan Demme
THE PLOT: A game of chance

THE DIRECTOR: John Dahl
DISTRIBUTOR: TriStar
RELEASE DATE: November 17

MULHOLLAND FALLS

THE PLAYERS: Will Smith, Jeff Goldblum, Bill Pullman
THE PLOT: A giant alien ship lands in the White House

THE DIRECTOR: Tim Allen
DISTRIBUTOR: TriStar
RELEASE DATE: November 17

NORTH STAR

THE PLAYERS: Christopher Lambert
THE PLOT: In this turn-of-the-century
THE DIRECTOR: Nils Gaup
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: January 11

THE PHANTOM

THE PLAYERS: Billy Zane, Cameron Diaz
THE PLOT: Anderson has female pals Sala
THE DIRECTOR: Simon Winter
DISTRIBUTOR: Paramount
RELEASE DATE: Summer 1996

THE QUEST

THE PLAYERS: Jean-Claude Van Damme
THE PLOT: Van Damme makes his directing
THE DIRECTOR: Jean-Claude Van Damme
DISTRIBUTOR: Universal
RELEASE DATE: July 4

THE ROYAL WAY

THE PLAYERS: Robin Williams, Morris Chestnut, Jonathan Demme
THE PLOT: A game of chance
THE DIRECTOR: Andrei Konchalovskiy
DISTRIBUTOR: Miramax
RELEASE DATE: July 4

THE SAINT

THE PLAYERS: Robin Williams, Morris Chestnut, Jonathan Demme
THE PLOT: A game of chance
THE DIRECTOR: John Dahl
DISTRIBUTOR: TriStar
RELEASE DATE: November 17

SANDBLAST

THE PLAYERS: Robin Williams, Morris Chestnut, Jonathan Demme
THE PLOT: A game of chance
THE DIRECTOR: David Caron
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: July 4



HAY'S DAY: Unforgettable looks for a killer in *Unforgettable*.



ALL SMILES: Seagal takes on *Secret Smile*

SECRET SMILE

THE PLAYERS: Steven Seagal.
THE PLOT: Seagal plays a government agent who uses smart drugs (insert snide comment here) in his quest to track down a killer. It's not known whether Seagal himself actually cracks a smile in this film. Acclaimed cinematographer Semler will lens **THE DIRECTOR:** John Semler
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: I B D

SHOCKWAVE

THE PLAYERS: Charlie Sheen.
THE PLOT: Admitted Heidi Fleissement Sheen will get \$5.25 million for playing a scientist who discovers radiation signals that portend an alien plot to invade Earth. One look at Sheen's mug and they probably turn back. Twobys, one of the writers who worked on *Waterworld*, will get his first crack at directing with this flick.
THE DIRECTOR: David Twohy.
DISTRIBUTOR: Live Entertainment
RELEASE DATE: I B D

A SIMPLE PLAN

THE PLAYERS: Nicolas Cage.
THE PLOT: Two brothers find a crashed plane full of cash and try to elude the criminals who want the money back. Acclaimed retro noir director Dahl. *The Last Seduction* direct.
THE DIRECTOR: John Dahl.
DISTRIBUTOR: Kinetic
RELEASE DATE: December

SOMETIMES THEY COME BACK... DEAD

THE PLAYERS: Michael Gross, Alex Arquette, Hillary Swank.
THE PLOT: A post-apologist returns to his hometown. The movie is set in the town of after the strange death of a local. The film is based on a book by Stephen King. Gross is best known as Alex Keaton father on *Family Ties*.
THE DIRECTOR: William B. Kaplan.
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: I B D

STAR WARS (Episode 1)

THE PLAYERS: Ewan McGregor, Liam Neeson, Natalie Portman.
THE PLOT: Just kidding. Reeves is just kidding. The movie is set in a galaxy far, far away. He is currently writing the new trilogy and says that he will direct at least one of the three parts. It's not a bad idea. The original *Star Wars* will reappear in theaters in 1997 with some new special effects.
THE DIRECTOR: George Lucas.
DISTRIBUTOR: Twentieth Century Fox.
RELEASE DATE: I B D

THEODORE REX

THE PLAYERS: Whoopi Goldberg.
THE PLOT: Goldberg plays a cop who is partnered with a 34cm miniature T. Rex. This holiday action-comedy, which was originally known as *T. Rex*. Maybe now that the movie has a new name it will actually get released.
THE DIRECTOR: Jonathan Betuel.
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: December 22

TWISTER

THE PLAYERS: Bill Paxton, Helen Hunt.
THE PLOT: Call this movie *Twister*. Wind. That's basically the idea for this flick, in which two tornado scientists track their prey across the Midwest. Paxton and Hunt have met before. What names do they have? Last summer's big hit *Armageddon*, but *Twister* aren't the star of this show -- the stars are the FX tornadoes, courtesy of ILM. The flick is based on a novel by the ubiquitous Michael Crichton.
THE DIRECTOR: Jan De Bont.
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.
RELEASE DATE: November 1996

UNFORGETTABLE

THE PLAYERS: Ray Liotta, Linda Fiorentino.
THE PLOT: Liotta plays a man in search of his wife's killer. Hoping to track the murderer through the minds of others, his character uses an experimental drug that allows him to experience other people's thoughts and emotions.
THE DIRECTOR: John Dahl.
DISTRIBUTOR: MGM/A
RELEASE DATE: I B D

WHITE SQUALL

THE PLAYERS: Jeff Bridges, Baltasar Koly, Caroline Goodall, John Savage, Scott Wolf.
THE PLOT: Veteran star Bridges leads a collection of kids, including *Party of Five*'s Scott Wolf, in a heartwarming tale of a boy's journey to his long-lost father.
THE DIRECTOR: Michael Scott.
DISTRIBUTOR: Buena Vista
RELEASE DATE: December



T. REX ROMAN: Goldberg pairs up with a prehistorical pal

For Love and Country

Liam Neeson and Jessica Lange take honor to the extreme as they defend home and hearth against royal interlopers



HISTORICAL FLING: Neeson and Lange live the good life before Roth (opposite page) invades their idyll

Rob Roy (MGM/UA) is the story of a Scottish clan in the early 18th century whose thoughtful and forward thinking leader gets caught up in the political skullduggery of the era. Early this summer, the movie got trampled by the year's other big-budget kilt-and-swords movie, Mel Gibson's rousing *Braveheart*

But the poor box-office showing of *Rob Roy* wasn't because it was introspective when *Braveheart* was enthusiastically gory. The problem was more basic: it is tedious, bland and almost totally bereft of life.

Neeson, who nabbed a well-earned Oscar nomination for his performance in *Schindler's List*, is a capable actor with an appealing screen presence. But his Robert Roy MacGregor is so pious, so wrapped up in his "honor," that

Neeson can't help but come across as self-mocking and ridiculous. At his worst, he appears to be satirizing the late Richard Burton's relentlessly low-key performance in the similarly themed classic *Becket*.

With Neeson playing a noble zombie, the viewer's eyes soon fall on Jessica Lange. As Rob's wife, the Academy Award-winner isn't fettered by endless pronouncements about honor and duty, but that doesn't mean she's given many

opportunities to show her range. Though she professes her love for Rob, their children and her fellow highlanders, she also struts about looking perpetually stoic and unreachable. Even after being ravaged by the film's chief villain, she simply glares at him as if she were offended that he didn't offer flowers and candy first.

The film's plot is rather straightforward. Rob, in an effort to improve the lives of his people, borrows money

from the local lord (a constipated-looking John Hurt) But before Rob's best pal can deliver the loan to the safety of the family, he is robbed, killed and dumped into the sea by the lord's viciously feckless right-hand man, deliciously played by Tim Roth.

Thankfully, Roth (*Pulp Fiction*) saves the 2 1/2-hour movie from being endlessly boring. Full of swagger and exasperated egoism, he glides through the movie thoughtlessly boffing wenches and slicing up drunken toughs. Though his character's a cad and a horrific sadist, Roth brings an entertaining lightness to the role. Prancing about in his curly wig and bright plumage, he delights in both playing the fop and proving to the local populace that, despite his get-up, he's a macho guy.

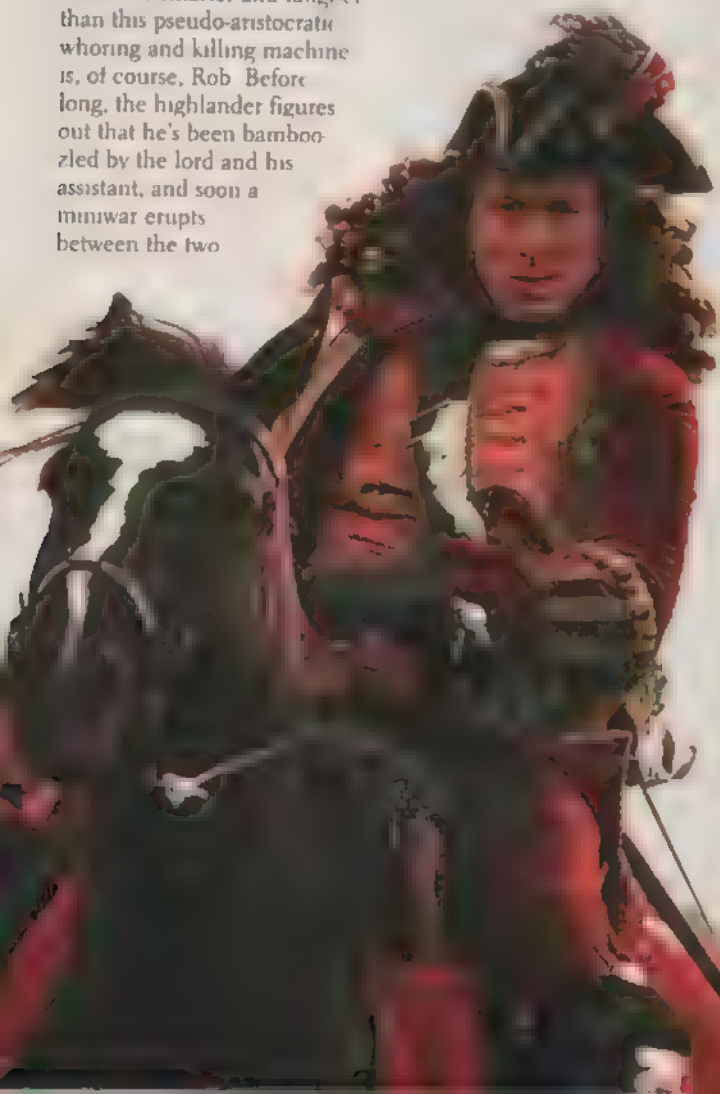
The only man in the disputed Scots kingdom who's obviously smarter and tougher than this pseudo-aristocratic whoring and killing machine is, of course, Rob. Before long, the highlander figures out that he's been bamboozled by the lord and his assistant, and soon a miniwar erupts between the two

camp, forcing Rob's small clan to retreat to the hills to escape the lord's army. Rob frustrates the lord's soldiers with hit-and-run tactics, until the lord gets fed up and takes it out on Rob's wife.

This brings Rob down from his mountaintop, and Neeson seems relieved to finally put the speechifying behind him in favor of good old-fashioned revenge. In a *Rocky*-like finish the clan leader and the curly-Q killer square off in a duel—and Rob finds himself getting sliced up. But though he's spouting blood and can barely stand, he doesn't give up. After all, his honor—as well as the honor of his wife—is at stake.

For aficionados of bravura individual performances, the movie is worth watching for Roth alone. The film itself, however, is an expensive fiasco of the first order. ★☆☆☆

—Frieda Noone



A BETHWELL'S



Sam Neill plays an insurance investigator who's been charged with selling

program fall into the hands of Sutter's agent, who, upon read-



WRITER'S BLOCK: Sam Neill gets into trouble with

...a takes a fascinating dream-like route that upends all pretense of realism. The ... into lanes that is

...a fictional town from one of Cline's books—for a back-to-

The premise and action are intriguing, but monster movie

Carpenter's best horror film since 1968, underappreciated

—Frank Kuzni

THE WAY THEY WERE

There are two schools of thought regarding former *NYPD Blue* star David Caruso: some can't take

by all the attention he's received.

Barbet Schroeder's *Kim of Death* (Fox)

remake of the Richard Widmark classic, isn't

Caruso stars as the suitably Cagneyesque

bottle as he rebuilds his life with his wife (Helen Hunt) and their baby daughter. Ah, but it's not to be.

to do one last favor for him. A ship-

ment of hot cars is set to be loaded onto a

arty dock, but the caravan is out-

rather forcefully point-

out to his cousin that he could be sent back to

change his mind. Eventually he gives

didn't go drastically wrong. *Kim*

of *Death* would be a pretty boring action

in officer named

the head.

Feeling betrayed, it's no wonder

that, urged on by prosecutors,

And, true to his luck, none other than

officer on the case.

Much of the film concentrates on the role-

club owned by his father. Little Junior, seen

behinds, forces the scheme to get up on its

in his underwear and dance.

For his part, Caruso quietly exudes

stares and whispering, constantly exuding

air of victimized anger. But his

never truly engaging or even sympathetic

viewing over his

age is knocking

over the scenery. We've

seen this movie done

before, and we've seen it

done better. It's not

one's list of all-time

best thrillers, but it's

worthwhile for a cheap

date. ★★★

—Frieda Noone

The Langoliers

Stephen King's *The Langoliers* (Republic) follows a group of people who take a left turn into an ersatz twilight zone. They're not sure how it happened. All they know is that they were asleep on a cross-country flight and when they awoke, they were the only people left on the craft. Fortunately, one of the people on board is an airline pilot.

Adding to the growing fear and hysteria among the survivors is the realization that something is coming after them. As it gets closer, it makes a sound not unlike that of Rice



STAR TURN: Bronson Pinchot loses control

Krispies popping through a megaphone. The *Langoliers* are making all that racket by eating everything they pass by like mutant Pac-Men.

The problem lies with the adaptation by writer/director Tom Holland. The original story was a novella. But this miniseries, which originally appeared on network TV, suggests that the source material was something akin to King's *It*. The scope of the production is huge, even though the story is minimalism in a microwave.

For those who are devotees of B-grade horror, *The Langoliers* will bring back memories of the Roger Corman movie *The Day the World Ended*, which tells the story of a group of nuclear-war survivors living in a fallout shelter while a monstrous menace waits outside. Most fans will likely prefer the hammy acting and quaint rubber monster of Corman's effort over this film's computerized flying mouths and stunted

seriousness. ★★☆☆☆

—Frank Kurtz

Casper

Making a film version of *Casper the Friendly Ghost* seemed like a stupid idea to many people. Like *The Flintstones*, another television cartoon elevated to the big screen, it screamed high-concept FX, but seemed to promise high-priced tedium.

But *Casper* is not a repeat of the *Flintstones* fiasco—in fact, it is one of the most engaging and memorable films of the year. Not only is it touching and full of pleasant humor, it's exciting. The script is witty and cleverly paced, the effects are spectacular and the acting is right on the mark.

Casper (Universal) stars Christina Ricci (*The Addams Family*) as Kat Harvey, a lonely kid whose father (Bill Pullman) has been chasing ghosts since the untimely demise of her mother.

When Carrigan Crittenden (Cathy Moriarty)

inherits Whipstaff Manor and hears that it holds a treasure, she grabs her partner (Eric Idle of Monty Python fame) and sets out to collect. But when she gets there, she discovers the house is inhabited by ghosts, and when all else fails, she calls on Kat's father. Dr. Harvey Dad immediately gives his attention to the troublemakers—Stinky, Fatso and Stretch. Kat, meanwhile, befriends their ethereal young nephew, Casper.

While the story is played strictly for entertainment, it doesn't avoid the inevitable, yet difficult, issue for this children's movie: the only way to become a ghost is to die, and that makes *Casper* a dead kid. The writers were brave enough to face this straight-on and even

went so far as to explain how Casper croaked. In fact, the film deals with death quite a bit, but in a way that shows death is not to be feared—it's just a stepping-off point to the next level of being.

Casper is one of the strongest cartoon-to-movie adaptations ever done, offering laughs, thrills and innocent adventure along with a subtle message about life and loss. ★★★★★—Marc Camron



THE CANDYMAN RETURNS

Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh continues the urban legend of the horrific diabolerie that stalked Chicago's housing projects in the successful original film.

Now the Candyman has moved on to New Orleans, where he lurks in

shadows, awaiting his skeptics' summoning—a feat accomplished by repeating "Candyman" five times while looking into a mirror. The demon then appears behind his victims and opens them up from "groin to gullet" with a hook that protrudes from the bloody

dump where his right hand

This second installment in the Candyman franchise pits our antihero against the Tarrant family. Ethan Tarrant (William O'Leary) is awaiting trial for the Candyman-style murder of

Phillip Purcell (Michael Calkin Cambridge). Purcell had discovered Clonus Ethan's father regarding the Candyman's existence, and Mr. Tarrant's body was later found cut to ribbons. With Ethan in jail, it's up to his sister Annie (Kelly Rowland) to clear her brother's name.

Predictable and repetitive, *Farewell to the Flesh* is far from a great movie, but it is actually much better than the by-the-numbers original. It even offers character development and a plot. It's fun formula filmmaking that's worthwhile for any serious horror fan, though it's unlikely that the timbreing Candyman will ever establish the impressive box-office track record of genre icons like *Jaws* or *Friday*. ★★★

John Horn

ON THE ROAD
Kelly Rowland looks for answers in *Candyman 2*



Space Cadet

Actress Kristin Kloake soars into Fox's Space

Kristin Kloake wants to get one thing straight at the very beginning

This is just a television show, okay?" she laughs. "This is not on the Discovery Channel, this is on Fox."

The reason for this disclaimer is that Kloake, one of the stars of the Fox network's much-anticipated sci-fi series *Space: Above and Beyond* (premiering September 24th), recently participated in the

going to be running around in prosthetics and cute little outer-space outfits. They ask us if this is 90210 in space. It's not. This is an action-adventure show and a military drama. It's like *China Beach* in the future. People really have the tendency to take it down the road of, 'Is it *The X-Files*? Is it *Star Trek*'?

Space: Above and Beyond is set in the future and chronicles Earth's efforts—through its Marines—to wage an intergalactic war with aggressive alien beings. So far, sci-fi

gauge. The show's backstory offers that her parents, Marine Corps officers engaged in Earth's "Artificial Intelligence War," were attacked and killed at their home by A.I.'s while Shane and her little sisters watched helplessly from the attic. She has joined up for this new war because, after years of being a surrogate parent to her sisters, she wants to take care of no one but herself for a while.

But Kloake says the two-hour premiere doesn't really explore the characters.

Still, Kloake is pleased with the direction the series is taking. "The really cool thing about the pilot is that we all spent a lot of time together while we were shooting in Australia, and we were there for two months. It was like working on a movie. It was a group of people spending two months on an island, and then [co-creators] Jim Wong and Glen Morgan wrote [the following episodes] utilizing our personalities. They were able to incorporate a lot of stuff that was sort of us into the script. I was afraid that the writing wouldn't be as good as the pilot, but it's better. I read it and couldn't put it down."

Indeed, Kloake says that she already feels a great affinity for Shane. "I think she's great, and I'm pretty lucky as an actress in this day and age of *Baywatch*—though I shouldn't knock it because everybody's got their own thing—that I get to play a really strong, smart, interesting woman. Whenever I thought about doing a television series, I was always afraid that I would go through the motions, and then on hiatus I would get the opportunity to play somebody interesting. But now I get to go to work and be somebody interesting every day. I really like her. She's someone I definitely would be friends with, though she definitely has some problems and needs a couple of hours with a shrink."

At this early stage of the show, Kloake has little indication of how her character will grow and evolve.

"I think it's similar to *The X-Files* in terms of the ap-

I think the pilot has a lot more pomp than circumstance," she says. "I think it was really supposed to be something incredibly visual. It sets up our characters in the two-hour time-slot while keeping the plot of the pilot going. There is a lot of fighting in the pilot in terms of it being a very heavy action-adventure, science-fiction-*Top Gun* type of movie, setting up three characters who will be explored later. I think it's really difficult to have all of

that in one chunk. In all honesty, it wasn't very exciting for us in terms of an acting capacity in that we didn't have a lot to act. We had a lot to do, but there wasn't a lot of acting involved. So it sets the characters up, but it doesn't really explore them."



ALL FOR ONE:
The *Space* crew
Kloake is front
and center.]

Television Critics Association press conferences, where she was barraged with a variety of questions—some of which she found, well, perplexing.

"People seem to have a hard time understanding the concept of the show," she says. "They can't grasp that we're not

right?" But the show's core isn't spaceships and phasers, it's the fears and pressures faced by the soldiers, with a particular focus on three of them—one of which is Kloake's character, Shane Vansen. Shane, more than the others, carries around quite a lot of emotional bag-

proach," says Kloake. "I don't know if those characters necessarily went anywhere, but a little bit more about who they are is revealed in terms of how they deal with different situations. Because *Space* is a military drama, we'll be thrust into all kinds of situations. Our characters will be defined by how they respond to them individually and as a group."

As Fox gets ready for *Space*'s premiere, Kloake finds that the most common question from journalists is whether or not she's a science fiction fan.

"The answer I've been giving is that I like my entertainment eclectic," she smiles. "If it's good, I like it. Like music I'll listen to anything appealing. When I watched *Space*, I was pretty amazed that this was television, because there's so much stuff going on right in front of you. We're not a big blue plate in the sky like *Star Trek*, we're fighting and blowing things up and in battle. I said to myself, 'Wow, that's aesthetically really exciting.' I really enjoyed it and was happy that I liked watching it."

She wasn't so sure when she was filming, though—especially during bluescreen work, the sequences where special effects are added afterward.

"Actually, it's pretty funny," she laughs. "All of the bluescreen stuff is just a riot. There are these guys rocking this little box that's supposed to be the ship. Women are filing their nails and everyone is sitting around there watching you. But then they add the effects. In the pilot, I didn't really know exactly what I was going for in those scenes. We did our bluescreen stuff at the very end, so by that time we were pretty burnt out and were really on a schedule. Our objective was just to get it over with. Looking back at it, there are things I would do differently, and I can see some elements I'd like to put in next time. I'm not too worried, though, because the director told me that I give good bluescreen." —Edward Gross



TUNED IN

by andy mangelis

The fall television season is upon us! Welcome back to the best source for news on your favorite sci-fi and action TV shows. All listed air times are Eastern Standard

ABC

Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman (Sunday, 8 p.m.) returns for its third season on Sept. 17. In "We Have a Lot to Talk About," the head of Intergang, Bill Church, Sr. decides to change his and Intergang's image and go straight, much to the dismay of his new wife and his son. Plus, Lois grapples with Clark's marriage proposal. The following week's "Ordinary People" (Sept. 24) is a "World's Deadliest Game" story, as a

deformed billionaire takes Lois and Clark to an island, and Clark can't use his super powers. Then, in "Contact" (Oct. 1), Lois' meeting with "aliens" leaves her with dangerous compulsions, while "When Irish Eyes Are Killing" (Oct. 15) has a mad druid stalking Lois to be his human sacrifice. For the coming season, don't look for Lex Luthor to return, as the only returning villain will be Tempus, the time traveler.

CBS

American Gothic (Friday, 10 p.m.) premieres on Sept. 20, following *Picket Fences*. While both shows are about sheriffs in small towns, the tone couldn't be any different. Gary Cole is the demonic Sheriff Lucas Buck, who rules the small town

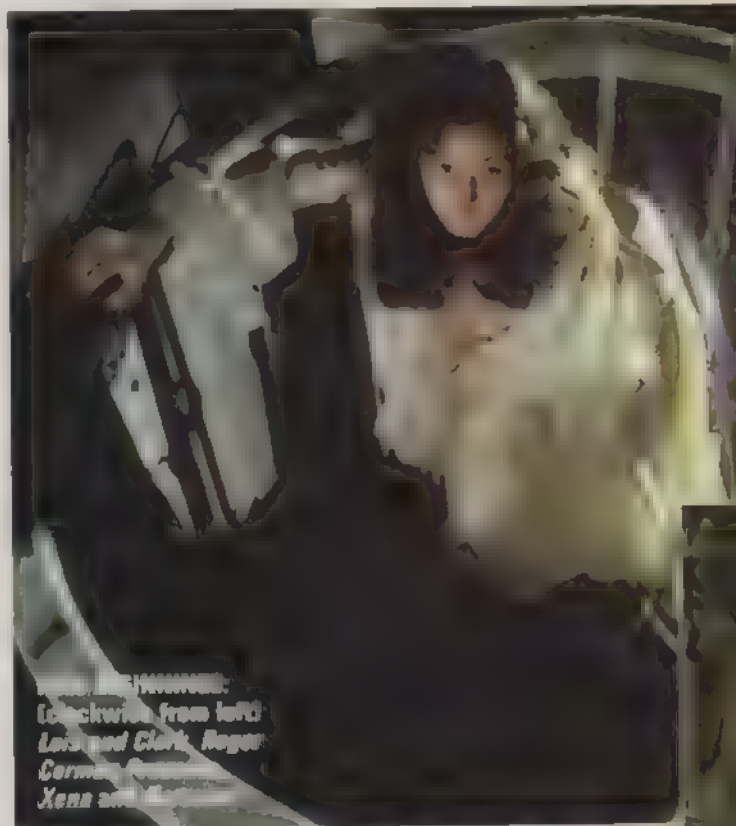
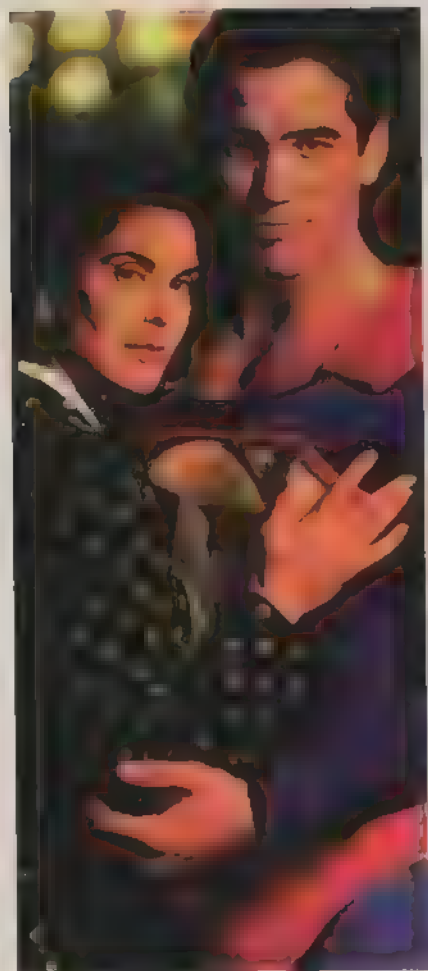
of Trinity, S. C. He won't let anybody or anything stand in his way, including the young girl whose neck he snaps in the pilot. His nemesis is the town doctor, Matt Crowder (Jake Weber), a widower who's already been to hell and back in the metaphorical sense. The first episode ends in a great cliffhanger with secrets aplenty. Who will gain control of the young orphan, Caleb (Lucas Black, a startlingly strong newcomer)? Look for some strong anti-chemistry between newspaper reporter Gail Emory (Pauze Turco) and the sexy schoolteacher Selena Coombs (Brenda Bakke).

NBC

SeaQuest DSX (Wednesday, 8 p.m.) returns on Sept. 20. Ten years have passed since the submarine was

blown up on an alien world, and the survivors have made it back to Earth. Joining the cast on the season premiere, "Brave New World," is Michael Ironside as Capt. Oliver Hudson and Elise Neal as an underwater fighter pilot. Jettisoned from the cast were Marco Sanchez and Rosalind

including murder, treason, espionage and terrorism. JAG co-stars Tracey Needham as a computer weapons specialist who works with Elliot's character, who's called Rabb. Expect lots of high-tech hardware: gunships, missiles, fighter planes and explosions. An early episode, "Shadows," pits Rabb



Allen. The submarine's former captain, *Jaw*'s Roy Scheider, will reappear in only a handful of episodes.

Also coming up on NBC is JAG, the new adventure-mystery show from *Quantum Leap* creator Donald Bellisario. JAG (Saturday, 8 p.m.) will premiere Sept. 23 with a two-hour episode. David James Elliott stars as a young Navy lawyer who's a member of the Judge Advocate General's office. From his base in Washington, D.C., he'll investigate criminal matters within the military.

and Austin against a hacker who's gained control of a Navy submarine near the Bermuda Triangle.

FOX

Space: Above and Beyond (Sunday, 7 p.m.) premieres on Sept. 24. The two-hour pilot will introduce the brave first-year Marine Corps fighter pilots whose mission is to stop the race of aliens who are out to conquer Earth in 2063. Fox has committed to 13 episodes of the space action-drama.

Meanwhile, *The X-Files*

(Friday, 9 p.m.) will be premiering its third season on September 22. The word out of the network is that "Mulder probably isn't dead, but he may not be alive." Okay. Twenty-four episodes are planned

UNITED PARAMOUNT NETWORK

Star Trek: Voyager, (Monday, 8 p.m.) premiered on Aug. 28 with a fascinating episode called "The 37s." The show's guest star was Sharon

Lawrence (*NYPD Blue*) as the 20th century's famous lost flier Amelia Earheart. That was followed by "Initiations" (Sept. 4) in which Chakotay was hunted by a Kazon youth in his rite-of-passage ritual. Meanwhile, you can expect an extra-long second season, as the final four episodes of the first season were held back for late airing. One of the four was "The 37s," and the others were "Elogium," "Twisted" and "Projections."

Nowhere Man (Monday, 9 p.m.) followed the *Voyager* premiere on Aug. 28 with a 90-minute pilot. Filmed in Portland, Ore., this *Fugitive-meets-The X-Files* series stars Bruce Greenwood as a documentary photographer whose life has been erased and who's on the run. Thirteen episodes have been ordered.

Deadly Games

Tuesday, 8 p.m.) premieres the first of its 13 episodes on Sept. 5. Leonard Nimoy and Paul Bernbaum produce this action-adventure series about inventor Dr. Gus Lloyd (James Calvert), whose videogame villains come to life. Although Christopher Lloyd plays the regular lead villain, guest villains will appear each week. The pilot features Tom Rathman of the Los Angeles—er, Oakland—*Raiders* (as Killshot), Shirley Jones (as Evil Shirley) and LeVar Burton as the boss from hell.

SYNDICATED & CABLE

Forever Knight

Monday, 10 p.m. will now air on syndicated stations and the USA Network. The new 22-episode season will premiere the week of Sept. 15/16 (syndication) and 18

(USA). New to the cast will be Lisa Ryder (*Kung Fu*), a sexy by-the-book police partner for the vampire Nick Knight. Also new are Nick's boss, Capt. Reese (Blu Mankuma of *Robocop: The Series*) and youthful "Lost Boy" vampire Javier Vachon (Ben Bass of *21 Jump Street*).

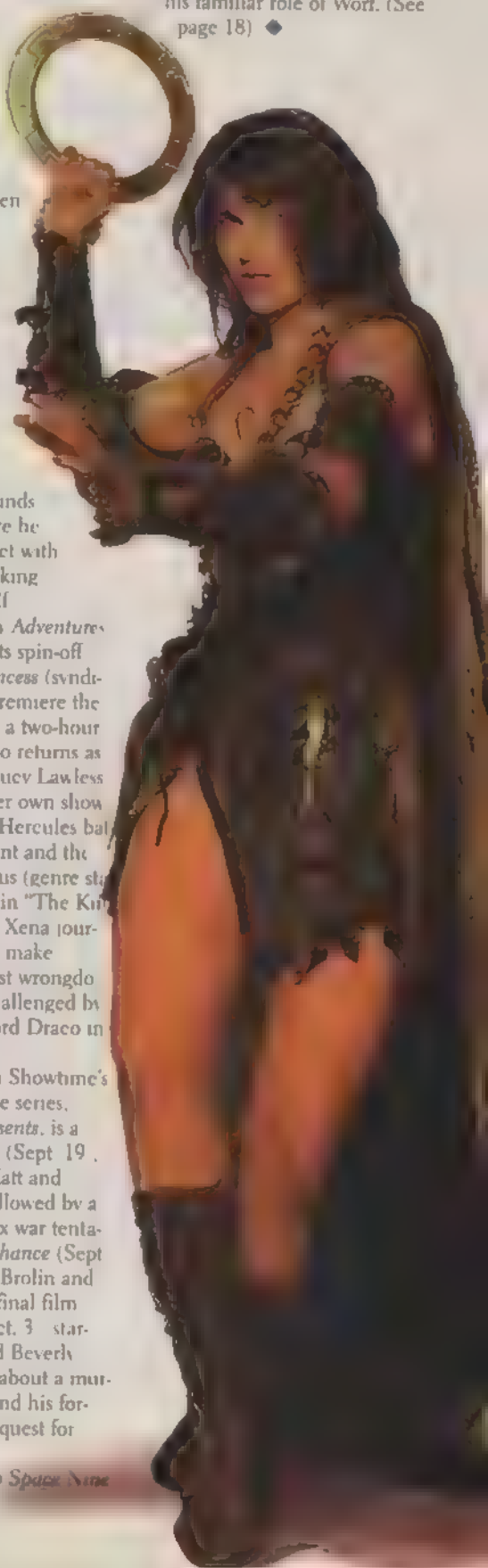
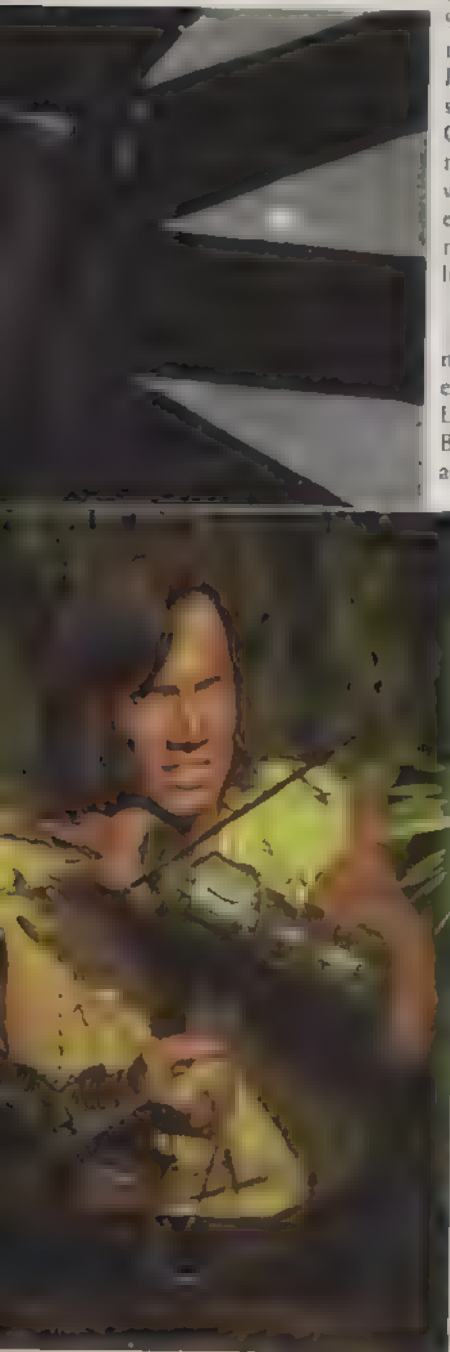
Highlander (syndicated) will make its fourth season premiere the week of Sept. 25. The first episode features MacLeod returning to his family's sacred burial grounds in Scotland, where he comes into conflict with the marauding Viking Immortal Kanwulf.

The Legendary Adventures Of Hercules and its spin-off *Xena, Warrior Princess* (syndicated) will both premiere the week of Sept. 4 as a two-hour block. Kevin Sorbo returns as Hercules, while Lucy Lawless spins Xena into her own show. In the premieres, Hercules battles a deadly serpent and the larcenous Autoclyus (genre star Bruce Campbell) in "The King of Thieves," while Xena journeys homeward to make amends for her past wrongdoings, only to be challenged by the vengeful warlord Draco in "Sins of the Past."

Coming up on Showtime's "original" showcase series, *Roger Corman Presents*, is a remake of *Piranha* (Sept. 19), starring William Katt and Alexandra Paul, followed by a post-apocalyptic sex war tentatively titled *Last Chance* (Sept. 26) starring James Brolin and Brion James. The final film will be *Hellfire* (Oct. 3) starring Ben Cross and Beverly Garland in a story about a murderous composer and his former lover on their quest for immortality.

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine

(syndicated) will begin its fourth season on Oct. 2, with a two-hour episode. New to the cast will be Michael Dorn, in his familiar role of Worf. (See page 18) ♦



THE 11th HOUR

The makers of *The 7th Guest* return with a new frightfest

It's a constant struggle for the gaming industry to come up with products that grab the attention of increasingly demanding consumers. Companies are pushed not only to expand computer technology, but also to stretch the conceptual envelope of gaming itself. The latest to find success is Trilobyte, Inc., the creators of the newly released horror-mystery game *The 11th Hour*.

A sequel to the runaway CD-ROM hit *The 7th Guest*, *The 11th Hour* is an interactive game that employs state-of-the-art full-motion video and 3-D computer graphics. While many CD-ROM products have tilted video presentations or show their visual information on small "matchbox" screens, viewers of *The 11th Hour* will see what is essentially a smoothly flowing movie on high-quality standard that Trilobyte first achieved with *The 7th Guest*.

"I think *The 7th Guest* was the first multimedia product that showed what CD-ROMs could do," says Graeme Devine, the co-founder and CEO of



BLOOD BATH A resident of *The 11th Guest's* haunted mansion cracks his bones.

Trilobyte. When *The 7th Guest* came out in 1993, the CD-ROM marketplace consisted mostly of "encyclopedias with text and stuff, but they didn't really justify the potential of that new multimedia machine," Devine says. But the arrival of *The 7th Guest*, a haunted-mansion tale that incorporated full-motion video with innovative

live actors, changed all that.

"It didn't look like a video game," Devine says of *The 7th Guest*, which sold almost a million copies in its first year. "There were no buttons to pull down. There was no text on the screen. It was a way to get to know and play to interact with."

The team at Trilobyte decided to take that approach to an even higher level with

The 11th Hour, according to Rob Landeros, creative director and co-founder of the company. "Basically, we decided to shoot movies—make it as good as we could, then rely on Graeme to come up with the technology to deal with it," Landeros says. The innovations that Trilobyte invented in order to be able to present such cutting-edge visuals amounts to

classic case of "content driving technology," he adds. "Ease of use and high-quality game play were the primary goals for Landeros and Devine, who think playing a CD-ROM game should be as easy as turning on a TV set and selecting a channel. A lot of games oversample the player by presenting too many possibilities, [but] there is such a thing as too much information," Devine says.

Truth be told, Landeros doesn't think *The 11th Hour* is a traditional interactive product. "The 11th Hour is not an interactive movie because we don't try to shatter the parameters of storytelling," he says. "We made a straightforward thriller with multiple endings—and at the same time, we developed a series of puzzles that relate to the

story. You must search each room in the house for a "hot spot"—a puzzle that must be solved.

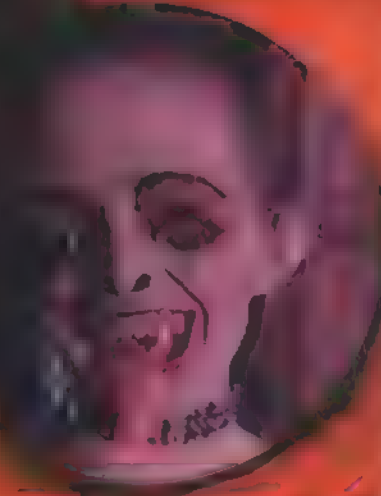
The correct solution brings the other objects alive, and when the right object is possessed, the player's memory is triggered with a glimpse of the story," explains *The 11th Hour* director David Wheeler. "The story is divided into modules. When you solve the final module, the final story that has led you to that point is revealed, just being to the entire story." Landeros wanted *The 11th Hour* to take a Gothic horror story and add some fully fleshed-out, three-dimensional characters.



characters, but still can stand on their own. By weaving the two entities, the game becomes highly interactive.

Like most interactive games, the user experiences *The 11th Hour* through the eyes of one main character. You play the part of television reporter Carl Devine, and you're investigating the disappearance of your producer in the creepy old Stauf mansion," Devine says. "The

game rates three different levels of visuals: more than 100 words of text, which is presented at 30 frames per second—the standard for television; three-dimensional computer graphics showing the inside of the Stauf mansion and finally, cutting-edge technology that places the actors inside the mansion's computer-generated interior.



Hours worth of polished visuals require lots of story

Knowing that the story was the key to the game's success, Wheeler, who is also a producer, was trying to make the most of the technology. "We had a lot of time to make the game as good as possible," he says. "We had a lot of time to make the game as good as possible."

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A LEGEND IN ITS OWN TIME

One of the most difficult things to achieve when creating a computer game is a logical world. But experienced gamers will tell you that *Legend* Entertainment rarely suffers from this problem. Its upcoming release *Mission Critical*, which will feature the acting talents of Patricia Charbonneau and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*'s Michael Dorn, could set a new standard for verisimilitude in computer software. In terms of graphics, game engine and storyline, *Mission Critical* is by far *Legend*'s most ambitious project to date.



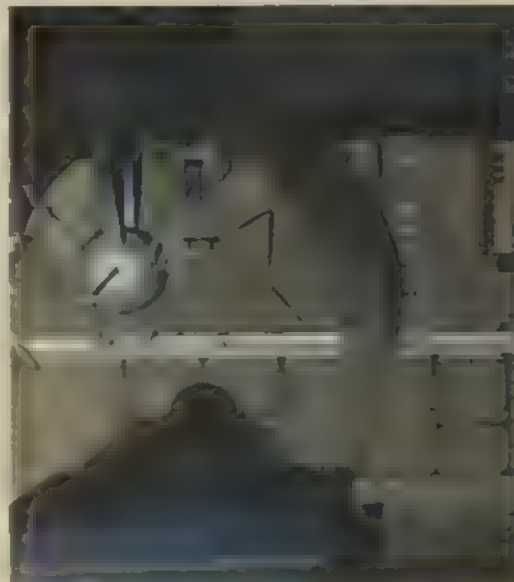
To create a logical universe for the game, *Mission Critical*'s developers wrote a 250-page production "bible" that contains everything from the geography of the planets in the game to the detailed workings of the propulsion systems on

the various ships. It also includes a 140-year projected history of the galaxy based on extrapolations of social, political and technological progress and trends. Such detail is necessary because the game is concerned with time travel and the moral issues of changing history. In fact, while *Mission Critical* has all of the trappings of an adventure game, it is more of a morality play. The player will be faced with choices throughout the game that require difficult decisions, such as determining the relationship of humans to artificial sentient life. No mere joy ride or exhilarating shoot-em-up, this game needs its players to think.

The game takes place in the year 2134, where, after 100 years of peace and prosperity, an alliance of Earth-bound nations and several colonial worlds are struggling to secede from the unified world government. The schism has been caused by the world government's attempts to suppress the technology of artificial sentience. The war between the

two powers is just entering a particularly savage phase.

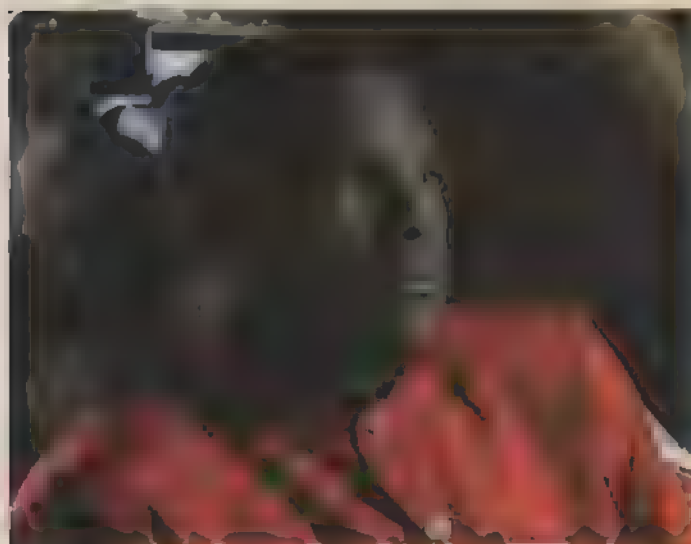
At the start of the game, the player awakens alone in the badly damaged hull of the U.S. Navy cruiser *Lexington*, which was ambushed while on a mission to a planet 68 light-years



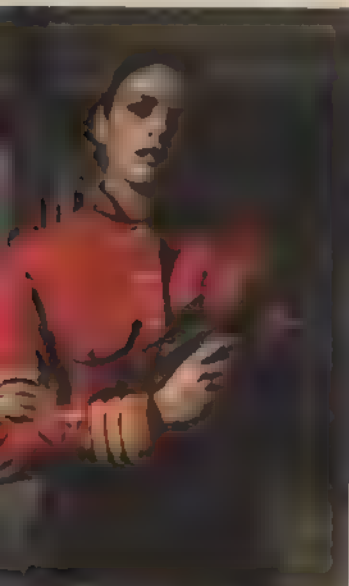
away. The player's first task is to repair the crippled ship in order to ensure survival and then to get the major systems back on line. Once this is accomplished, the player must descend to the surface of the planet Persephone to investigate the source of mysterious transmissions.

It is here that *Mission Critical*'s production "bible" becomes important. The emanations are coming from time-traveling mechanical sentients descended from those created by humans in the 22nd century. Their goal is to prevent the destructive war that the player is currently engaged in, and it is here that the player must begin to make significant

ethical choices. While significant emphasis has been placed on giving the player a satisfying game



play—the player directs all of the combat sequences in real time—the chief goal of *Mission Critical* is to win the game and see the implications behind all of the choices that were made. It is these choices, not the story itself, that interested



designer Mike Verdu of Legend. Rather than simply create an interesting adventure, his goal was to write "a story with real depth to it—not to mention a big, dramatic finish with profound implications for the future of mankind."

While *Mission Critical* marks the third major piece of entertainment software that Michael Dorn has had a part in (he did voice-over work for Sierra's *Gabriel Knight* and Spectrum HoloByte's *Star Trek: The Next Generation A Final Unity*), it is the first time he will appear physically in a game. His image and that of Charbonneau will be composited into a rendered interior of a starship during the battle sequences.

Mission Critical is on schedule to be released this fall for PC CD-ROM. Early buzz suggests that it will live up to and even surpass the wildest expectations of its designers.

Steve Honevwell

BY MIKE RILEY

MEMORY OVERLOAD

On last summer's Denzel Washington actioner *Virtuosity*, the villain is a computer program that builds itself a body using nanotechnology. This real science, currently in its infancy, involves constructing tiny machines that act the same way as human cells. Of course, the notion of using technology to create or improve humanity isn't new—pace makers and shunts, for example, are unbedded in thousands of people, to keep them alive. The moral issues have already been hashed over, leading to the development and insertion of larger-scale artificial organs such as the Jarvik "artificial heart."

But what I'm really talking about is the

complete melding of computer technology with human physiological systems. Once a powerful computer chip and the necessary memory required to control it can be shrunk to the size of a freckle, the placement of that technology within the body will become commonplace.

What really fascinates people—the poor box office of *Johnny Mnemonic* notwithstanding—is the possibility of having such technology interface with the body's source of organic computation—the brain. If scientists can ever truly understand the complete structure and function of virtually every synapse in the brain, the next logical step would be augmenting native intelligence and retention abilities with a biochip. Inevitably, it would become impossible to succeed in business or any other endeavor without a brain implant.

Imagine being able to call forth all available recorded information—from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* to every issue ever printed of the *Wall Street Journal*—simply by closing your eyes. The images and data are all accessed and uploaded through thought processes, triggering the chip to send the needed information through the optical nerves of the brain. The converse of this could also exist. Perhaps the chip could record every experience, every second of life, in the chip's storage area. This information could be off-loaded when that person's brain ceases to function to add to the greater wealth of human knowledge. Immortality—in the form of a

silicon wafer—could be assured. These experiences could even be downloaded into a newborn's chip to perpetuate the intellectual life and memories of the deceased individual—though that would probably make for an irritatingly precocious and somewhat schizophrenic kid. (Perhaps such information could be stored in a youngster's chip with a timing device that would not release it until the recipient was, say, 21 years old.) The utility of bio-chips could affect every aspect of society. In the event of a murder, criminals and victims alike could participate in a trial that would derive from their life "stories" being uploaded into a master judiciary computer that would display and compare each

participant's experience and reach a judgment based on the wisdom it had received from generations of such input.

As we all know, there exists a terrible dark side to this dream. Early experiments will surely render mutants or produce deadly side effects—at the very least, there will be a rejection by the body of this foreign object. (Remember what happened to the Bionic Woman?) And should the biotechnologists succeed, another set of problems would arise. For one thing, reality and fiction will be

indistinguishable. A person might not be able to determine what's true and what's projected because there would be no physical separation between real intelligence and experience and those that are artificial. Another possibility is the implanting of delusions or viruses that could corrupt the recipient or brainwash him or her, perhaps allowing the creation of biomechanized armies of zombies, void of choice and humanity.

While this is only science fiction now, it is technologically possible. Visionaries like Galileo were called insane for what are now obvious observations. Even at the beginning of this century, people scoffed at the notion that a man would one day walk on the moon. There is something hard-wired into the human psyche that drives it to break beyond what experience initially tells us is impossible. That drive will bring forth the technology to hard-wire another element into the human psyche. ♦

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The Beginning of the Universe

From the original *Star Wars* to the new *Star Wars* films, the universe has been expanding. Now it's time to explore the beginning of the universe.

Few people "got" *Star Wars* when George Lucas was shopping his idea for the epic around Hollywood in the early '70s. One of the exceptions was former Boeing illustrator Ralph McQuarrie, and he was rewarded by being anointed the trilogy's chief visual conceptualist.

Now McQuarrie and writer Kevin J. Anderson have expanded the world that Lucas and McQuarrie first imagined 20 years ago into a new book called *The Illustrated Star Wars Universe*, which will be published by Bantam Books this month. Filled with original *Star Wars* sketches and drawings, *The Illustrated Star Wars Universe* expands the galaxy that millions of fans have experienced in the trilogy of blockbuster films.

Planets like Hoth, Dagobah and Alderaan are explored in detail through more than 125 illustrations and through original narratives. Anderson, author of *Star Wars* best-sellers such as *Jedi Search*, *Dark Apprentice* and *Champions of the Force*, supplies the accounts of characters like Hoole, an anthropologist who gives a full report on the desert planet of Tatooine. There's also an enthusiastic travelogue of the floating Cloud City once owned by Lando Calrissian from a city councilman named Po Ruddle, an Imperial scout named Philbee Jhorn supplies a detailed description of the forest moon of Endor, and so on.

McQuarrie says he never dreamed that his chance meeting more than two decades ago with a then-unknown George Lucas would change his life.

I was working on an animated movie





FAR-OUT ARE *The Illustrated Star Wars Universe* contains more than 125 images, 25 of which were commissioned for the book

in the early '70s called *The Apollo Flights*, and we were doing rockets and moon surfaces," McQuarrie remembers. "A guy named Hal Barwood came in to show his student film. He knew George Lucas so through Hal I met George."

The young director, who was then finishing up his first film, *THX 1138*, came by to look at McQuarrie's work, but the artist didn't think much of the encounter at the time.

"He talked to me about his idea for *Star Wars*, but he didn't have a name for it then," McQuarrie says. "It was just a big galactic war, and I said it sounded kind of interesting, not thinking it would mean anything to me specifically."

A couple of years passed, and one day McQuarrie got a call from Gary Kurtz, Lucas' producer. "He'd asked if I would be interested in doing some illustrations [for *Star Wars*]. He and George came by the same day and dropped off the script, and George said

"Read it, and whenever you come to something that you think would make a good illustration, just make some sketches and we'll talk about it later."

McQuarrie was soon working night and day on his ideas for the project, despite his misgivings about the possibility of such a huge production ever getting in front of the cameras. "It was so expensive, and the audience for science fiction wasn't all that big then," he says. "I don't think [the studios] understood what George had in mind. I didn't either right away, but I worked on it for a while and began to see it: a big spectacular visual experience. I was getting very excited about it, and I guess those [illustrations] helped sell the project."

Once production began, McQuarrie reports that he was so busy dreaming up the details of Lucas' fantastic worlds that he never even visited the set of the first movie. "I did see the sets for *The Empire Strikes Back*," he says. "I was in England with the rest of the crew, isolated in a little art room. The English guys there weren't very inter-

ested in what I was talking about—they let me know that they could handle [things], which was true." But as Lucas' trusted co-visionary, McQuarrie was charged with making sure that each movie "looked like the *Star Wars* we wanted it to be."

The artist says he's especially enthusiastic about this new book because it allows *Star Wars* fans to get a look at some of the sketches that didn't make it into the final films. "For example, there was an ice castle for *Empire* that I don't think has been seen by anyone," he says. "I was hoping to get it in, but George said he'd like to preserve Hoth as a totally barren planet." Still, most of his work, says McQuarrie, appeared in the films "pretty much like I wanted it."

McQuarrie says once he had the vision for the trilogy in his head, the rest flowed easily. "There wasn't anything that was particularly difficult for me. I always knew what everything should be like—I had this feeling about it."

But that's not to say that every detail ended up looking just as McQuarrie had envisioned. "I would have loved to have seen a little more careful work on the helmets for the Stormtroopers and for Darth Vader. Essentially, they liked what I drew, but I wish I could have refined them a bit. I was amazed at how crude those things could be and still work on the screen."

McQuarrie was also less than enthusiastic about what became one of *Return of the Jedi*'s most popular creations. "There was a fair amount of thrashing around when it got to the look of *Jedi*, especially the Ewoks. George kept saying, 'More and more cute!' so everybody was making them more cute," he says. "I never thought they should be cute, so I dropped out of the Ewok contest. If I just couldn't come up with anything, I'd just go work on something else." —Mo Ryan



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THE FEATS of SAN FRANCISCO

With the high-octane thriller *Jade*, Oscar-winning director William Friedkin cuts to the chase (scene) in a bid to return to action-genre form **BY DEAN LAMANNA**

Call it Friedkin's Law: If a film made by William Friedkin doesn't have flying cars or spinning heads, it won't be memorable, much less a hit. Indeed, those more inebriated industryites who frequent the Hollywood cocktail party circuit have to go back nearly a quarter-century—to that classic 1973 horror juggernaut *The Exorcist*—to recall one of his films. But the fact is, since his 1967 feature debut with the kooky Sonny and Cher vehicle *Good Times*, Friedkin has been one of the town's most fitfully influential, and consistently employed, directors—with an Oscar win for his landmark 1971 actioner *The French Connection* and a new project released, on average, every two or three years. It's just that, aside from his semisuccessful, mid-'80s comeback attempt with *To Live and Die in L.A.*, few people have seen the dozen or so movies he's made in the last two decades. And even fewer critics have liked them.

Now, armed with a typically pricey and commercial script by Joe Eszterhas (*Basic Instinct*) and a hot cast toplined by David Caruso (late of *NYPD Blue*), Friedkin is gunning to reinstate his premier genre and box-office status with Paramount's *Jade*, which opens Oct. 13. The \$40 million action-thriller follows ambitious San Francisco Assistant District Attorney David Corelli (Caruso) as he unravels the murder of a socialite. In the process, Corelli begins to suspect his ex-college girlfriend, Katrina Gavin (*The Last Seduction*'s Linda Fiorentino)—placing a strain on his close friendship with her lawyer husband, Matt Gavin (Chazz Palminteri, last seen in *Bullets Over Broadway*). As Corelli's investigation deepens, the three principals become intertwined in increasingly less sociable and ever more lethal ways. "What unites my films," says Friedkin, a 56-year-old native Chicagoan who cut his teeth in local television, "is that they all involve characters living on the edge of intense situations that force them into irrational behavior."

That behavior has led to some outrageous celluloid stunts. And, in the tradition of *The French Connection* and *To Live and Die in L.A.*, the filmmaker is promising a knock-out car chase or two in *Jade*—including one through the narrow, crowded and hilly streets of

San Francisco's Chinatown that should have audiences splintering their armrests. But Friedkin finds the psychological underpinnings of such mayhem as seductive as the blazing firearms and crumpling fenders. "I'm interested in people who live without alternatives, whose backs are against the wall," he says. "I'm also fascinated by criminal behavior—what pushes people over the line."

The director explores that fascination by pushing his own actors to the limits of their ability. According to Caruso, who left the hit television series *NYPD Blue* in part for what he considered a rare opportunity to collaborate with Friedkin, "Working with Billy is going to tell you a lot about yourself. You can come away irked, but I gotta tell ya, I love the guy. He's like a fuckin' general who pulls stuff out of you that you didn't know was in there, and you're better for it. He's relentless."

"I was an usher at a movie theater when *The French Connection* happened," the 39-year-old actor (his big-screen credits include *An Officer and a Gentleman* and the recent *Kiss of Death*) recalled during the filming of *Jade* last winter. "It was a huge hit, and to be working with Billy at this stage of the game is ideal for me."

Caruso doesn't deny that the helmer's flair for sending automobiles flying made the part of Corelli (which Warren Beatty reportedly had once been tempted to play) a particularly juicy carrot. "You're going off one of those jump ramps in San Francisco at 60 miles an hour—Aaaah! And they have a camera mounted there so you can't chicken out."

Even an ex-TV cop knows better than to run a-fowl of Friedkin's Law. ♦

